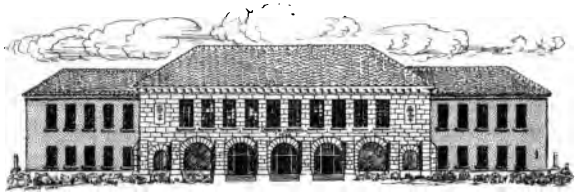
THE SCHOOL AND ITS LIFE

GILBERT



THE

SCHOOL AND ITS LIFE

A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF

The Principles of School Management and Organization

BY

CHARLES B. GILBERT

Lecturer on Education, Western Reserve University
Formerly Superintendent of Schools, St. Paul, Minn., Newark, N. J., and Rochester, N. Y.

SILVER, BURDETT AND COMPANY
NEW YORK BOSTON CHICAGO

To

PRESIDENT CHARLES F. THWING

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

"Friend! gracious word! the heart to tell is ill able
Whence came to men this jewel of a syllable."

SANSCRIT BOOK OF GOOD COUNSELS.

PREFACE

THIS book contains a brief discussion of a few of the vital problems that arise in schools and school systems. It does not claim to be a philosophy of school management, yet it endeavors to show the relations of these problems, as to both their sources and their solutions, to that comprehensive view of life which we call philosophy.

Its treatment is based upon the creed that life is one, especially that the single human life is simple in the midst of its complexity, that its thread is continuous and easily traced. No portion of it can justly be treated apart from the whole. The principles that determine its character at one time determine it at all times. Hence school life is to be judged and its office regulated not as apart from the wider life but as a part of it. During the school period and the subsequent period the laws of growth, which is education, are the same. There are no fundamental differences in principle. The differences are merely those of condition and environment.

In directing the life of the school, we need not to seek for new bases of conduct or new stimuli to activity, but merely to apply to the necessary conditions of the school those universal laws of life and growth that may be known and read of all men.

Much of the wastefulness of school life is due to attempts to do something extraordinary and unlike what is done in

the other affairs of life, to create a peculiar institution founded upon some mysterious peculiar principle. Hence our work has been so largely artificial and correspondingly futile.

It is life that educates, life in its totality, and school offers a life to the pupil. The character of this life determines the education.

Hence the aim of school should be to place the children in the midst of a natural, sane, and wholesome life, free from all false, ephemeral, and artificial standards and stimuli.

To show how this may be done in a few of the many possible instances is the aim of this book. It is hoped that it may at least stimulate thought, and suggest to some teachers and school officers, burdened with the responsibility of their work, a practical solution of some of their problems.

C. B. GILBERT.

New York, March, 1906.

CONTENTS

THE SCHOOL AND ITS LIFE

CHAPTER I

Some Problems

The literature of the psychological and philosophical phases of education is vast and reasonably sufficient; that of its practical aspects is meager and unsatisfactory.

This Book to Discuss Practical Problems.

The aim of this book is to discuss a few of the practical problems of school administration with the hope that further discussion by other writers engaged in school work may be stimulated.

These practical problems are many, difficult, and apparently far from solution. Our philosophies of education and our practices are sadly out of harmony. We have yet to find the point of contact between them.

The problems of education are both psychological and sociological. If it were possible to consider separately the two classes and weigh them, it would undoubtedly appear that the latter is the more important, but stress has been laid chiefly on the psychological.

The late Dr. Arnold Tompkins in his admirable treatise on the Philosophy of Teaching states that a school primarily consists of a self-educating pupil. If education is purely a psychical process, this is true; if it is largely a social process, the statement is only partially true. Indeed, the single pupil is not a school at all.

If we view education in its entirety, the first article in our creed must be, "We believe that the function of the school is to train youth into social efficiency." Hence it follows inevitably that the training must be social; the school must be a social institution, and the chief practical problems of school administration are social problems. They deal with people in relation to one another.

The School to Train for Social Efficiency.

Necessarily in all discussion of educational questions the individual child must be the center, yet considered not chiefly as a psychical unit, but rather as a part of a larger social unity.

It is true that we cannot in theory draw a sharp distinction between psychology and sociology as the basis for teaching. A child cannot receive the best psychical training without a recognition of his social needs. The highest type of individual is developed not in isolation, but in society. Rasselas, solitary with his solitary teacher, represents a very poor school indeed.

Sharp Distinctions Impossible.

Nor can we train a child for society without considering his psychical needs. Indeed these needs constitute the necessary groundwork of all teaching, and the only true criterion of a school is the extent to which it satisfies them. But these needs include fitness to mingle with others effectively.

Hence the practical problems which we are to discuss in these pages are mainly sociological problems. Within the limit prescribed, it will be possible to discuss but a few, selected from the countless number facing every one who is concerned with the administration of school affairs, and these will mainly be taken from the field of the elementary school. They include questions arising in the single school with its one

Practical Problems Chiefly Sociological.

teacher and one class, and those arising in the school system, whether that system be housed under one roof and directed by a principal, or include the many houses and many schools of a great city or a state and be governed by many officials with an extensive and elaborate machinery.

In the former class the problems are simpler and fewer but fundamental in character. Here the children are trained. Here the real work of school education is carried on. The problems arising in the system of schools are many and large. But they all have one common factor, the school, and their solution must always include the answer to one question, viz.: How can the system be made to aid the teacher in his work in the individual school? For here is the root of the matter. In the individual school each child is to be trained to serviceable life in society, and the excellence of a system, large or small, is measured, not by the impressiveness of its mechanism nor the brilliancy of the educational theories exploited, but by its efficiency in furthering the work of the single teacher with the single class.

Problems of the Single School.

The first questions to consider then are those which concern the individual school. Some of them are these: What are the proper personal relations between teacher and pupils and how are they to be secured? What attitude toward the work and the children should the teacher professionally assume? What kind and degree of liberty should be conceded to the pupils? How can their aims and endeavors for the conduct of the school be brought into harmony with those of the teacher? To what degree and in what way may the school be made a democratic institution?

How may intelligent self-direction for altruistic ends be cultivated in the children? What should be the relations

of the children to one another and how should these be brought about?

How may the highest degree of intellectual vigor be secured in the pupils and how shall it be employed so as best to equip them for successful living?

How shall the teacher reconcile the claims of the individual children, in particular the exceptional ones, with the demands of the school as a whole?

These and many more questions are involved in the one great and elemental question: How may the school be so organized and administered as best to attain its true purpose, that of educating children into social efficiency?

But the smallest single school in the smallest and most remote rural schoolhouse has other problems to meet than these. Although it is in itself a social whole, it is yet a part of a larger society with which it has many points of contact and to which it is accountable. Indeed it is to these relations that its very existence is due. Hence in its administration they must be considered. The school is after all but a small part of that life which is education, and it is only as it performs its functions in proper relation to the influences making the larger part, that it is most efficient.

So it becomes necessary to consider the relations of the teacher and the school to the homes from which the children come, and this necessity frequently raises questions both delicate and difficult. What are the respective limits of authority of the home and the school? How may both be brought to recognize their own limitations? How may the best in the home be made to strengthen the school, and how may the school stimulate and aid the higher life of the home?

Further, we are coming to recognize the fact that the school with its equipment has social functions of a high

order in the general community life. These too must be taken account of in the administration of the school. How may the school be made to stimulate the intellectual and moral activities of the community? What use should be made of its building, its library and other equipment, for higher social purposes?

These are some of the practical questions arising in connection with the administration of the individual school.

Problems of the System of Schools.

When we advance from the single school to the school system we find the problems increasing rapidly in number and complexity. The teacher then becomes one of many. His functions become specialized. He must do certain things in harmony with others, and we are brought to the consideration of such questions as the relations of the teachers to one another, both those who are doing the work of the same grade and those working in different grades; the relations between teachers and the various supervising officers; the relations of these officials to one another; the relations of all to the people's representatives in authority over them, as school boards, school committees, and the like. How may the necessary machinery of a system accomplish its purpose and yet not hinder the work of the individual teacher with the individual children but rather reinforce it? What relations should local systems bear to state and national systems? What relations should school organization bear to the general government, local, state, and national?

With the development of school systems in large communities, too, come increasingly difficult problems concerning the relations of the schools to the community life. How may bureaucracy be avoided and the schools remain in close touch with the people, responsive to their felt needs? How

may the extensive and expensive plants of the school systems be used to stimulate the higher community life?

These are some of the questions of practical school administration which need careful consideration and more abundant discussion than they have received. As stated at the outset, in this book I shall endeavor to state more fully some of them, not to settle them,— with the hope that others may follow with the results of their experience.

CHAPTER II

The School and School Life

A school is a social institution. Reduced to its lowest terms the society consists of two — a teacher and a learner. As ordinarily found it consists of a teacher and several learners. It is a unity in variety. There is severalty in its composition, unity in its aim. Yet this unity of aim is different from that in an industrial institution. The school aims not to put forth a single, common product as does a factory. The product is as multifarious as the component parts of the community. It is individual, not common. But the life is common in its aim, its method, and its spirit. There are community of interest, community of purpose, community of means and activities, but not uniformity of product.

School a Social Institution.

To keep this balance, so that the common life shall be preserved and at the same time the individual need and the individual aspiration satisfied, so that each shall contribute to the general welfare and at the same time derive the utmost individual good from the common life — this is the great problem of school administration.

The bond which makes the school a community is spiritual, not material. It is not the one room in which its members work, nor the one course of study which they pursue, nor the uniform text-books which they use, but rather the community of aim, the unity of spirit which actuates them.

Dr. Arnold Tompkins has said that a school is a spiritual union of teacher and pupil. This is true of the school in its lowest terms. It is equally true that an ideal school of larger size is a spiritual union of teacher and pupils. It is not merely a union of the teacher with each pupil, nor with the school as a whole. It is rather a union of all with all. The union of pupil with pupil, of each pupil with all the others, is quite as essential as that of the teacher with the pupils. The teacher is the active, conscious, unifying force. Only such a school can serve the real *end of education, which is social efficiency* in each individual member of the community.

School a Spiritual Union.

A school, then, is a community, consisting of teacher and pupils, who are living together a conscious, purposeful life; whose aim is the growth of its members in knowledge, wisdom, righteousness, and social efficiency.

This school community has as its unifying agencies, its common ideals, its morale, its conventions, its occupations.

These four elements constitute a single life; they cannot be separated. Even if those who direct the school administration are unconscious or regardless of some of them, they are all present. School life, like all spiritual and community life, is composed of these elements, and here, as everywhere, all conscious or unconscious ignoring of any of them brings disaster.

Four Elements of School Life.

Many a hard-working, conscientious teacher struggles so earnestly to secure certain results in the more manifest phases of school life, as learning and the observance of school conventionalities, that the common ideals and the true morale are lost sight of, with the result that the life as a whole is on a low plane

Higher Ends often Obscured.

and the training for social efficiency is either negative or positively evil. This is especially apt to be the case when marks, prizes, and examinations are the stimuli and criteria employed. When secondary ends rather than primary are placed as the objects of effort, the life as a whole is low, and hence the training as a whole is toward evil habits of thought and is distinctly degrading.

Therefore in planning and conducting the administration of a school, immediate and patent "results" must often be subordinated to more remote and less obvious ends. In the education of souls, material and manifest criteria are dangerous and need to be employed with great discretion. The individual who can answer the most deftly the greatest number of questions is by no means always the most successful or useful member of society, and the school whose pupils can secure the highest marks in examination is by no means always the best school. It does not necessarily even impart the most knowledge. It is the school life in its entirety that counts in preparation for the larger life of the larger society of after years.

Danger of Formal Standards.

For the sake of clearness, however, it will be necessary to deal somewhat separately with the various elements of school life, *ideals*, *morale*, *conventions*, and *occupations*, and it will be simpler to treat of the last first, since the spirit, method, and subject-matter of school occupation constitute the principal factor, next to the teacher himself, in determining the character of the school life.

SCHOOL OCCUPATION

The popular statement of the purpose for which children go to school is "to learn." The accumulation of knowledge

is the conspicuous motive of the occupations which employ their time while there. This is inevitable. The possession of knowledge is unquestionably one of the absolutely essential conditions of successful living and, besides, it is one of the most easily tested results of effort. Hence in the average school all effort centers in this one aim. Children do go to school to learn, and if they learn, especially if they learn those things which have become the conventional requirements of school, parents and teachers are usually satisfied.

Children Go to School to Learn.

Knowledge, however, important as it is, is but one of the desirable results of school activities. Indeed, unless it is accompanied by other results, knowledge itself is nearly valueless. Acuteness of perception, judgment, reasoning power, alertness, breadth, and elevation of interest are among the intellectual attainments which should accompany knowledge, grow out of it, and make it practically available, and these should all be secured through the occupations of the school life.

Knowledge but One of the Results.

Moreover, much of the moral and social training essential to worthy living is the product of properly organized work. Indeed the occupations of people, both in school and in the larger life, are largely responsible for their ideals. In a well-ordered life the moral and industrial elements are well-nigh indistinguishable. Life is one, and what we do is almost of necessity in harmony with what we believe and what we aspire to.

Occupation the Key.

COURSE OF STUDY

The occupations of the school are usually laid down with more or less definiteness in a *course of study*.

It is not my purpose at this point to treat the course of

study in any detail. But it seems proper to state a few principles underlying all good courses in order that the relations of occupation to school life in its totality may appear and the unity of it all may be more manifest.

A course of study should be both mandatory and suggestive; mandatory as to broad plan and purpose, and suggestive as to details, methods, and material. It should be such as will stimulate intellectual activity and develop initiative in both teacher and pupils. It should recognize the differences in minds and the fact that to compel one mind to follow exactly the routine laid down by another is weakening, not strengthening. The great danger of organized education is the tendency to produce that similarity of product which indicates machine make. Hence the suggestiveness and the stimulating quality of a course of study are more important than even the mandatory general plan.

Course of Study both Mandatory and Suggestive.

The latter, however, is necessary for the avoidance of vagueness and desultoriness of work. A course of study must require that certain results be accomplished at certain stages, and it must encourage and stimulate teachers to find the best way of accomplishing these results.

A course of study must indicate a body of knowledge to be acquired and a range of activities to be engaged in. The former should be broad, so as to establish many points of contact with the world. The latter should be wide, so as to exercise and develop all the potentialities of nascent minds. The relations between the two should be very close.

Duality of Course of Study.

The activities required should be upon objects evidently worth while, in the main those connected with the body of knowledge presented. There is a tendency among the

makers of text-books, and among teachers as well, to devise work which exercises but a few of the natural activities of the mind, and to ding-dong upon these with wearisome iteration, while pursuing that will-o'-the-wisp of elementary education, thoroughness. Drill for drill's sake is a positive fetich with many, especially in mathematics and the languages, including the mother tongue. Such drill is worse than waste. It deadens interest and defeats its own ends by limiting and, in some cases, actually arresting growth.

Every Exercise Must Have a Motive.

Every exercise should have an evident motive beyond itself. If the subject is reading, the golden end should be appreciation of the matter read; if language, the forceful and artistic expression of worthy thought; if mathematics, the comprehension of those wonderful relations of which mathematics is the mode of expression. These higher and remoter ends should be evident to the children. This ennobles drill and makes it seem worth while. It supplies the motive, which alone makes drudgery possible to active minds.

Abundant drill in all departments can always be secured upon problems that are vital. Life is full of such real problems even for children, and their mastery constitutes the truest education, it even furnishes the best drill. A boy making a boot-blacking box in the manual training shop, doing his own computing, measuring, drawing, and fitting, is getting better mathematical drill within the range of his work than any mere memorizing and repetition of the words of a table of measurements can possibly give him.

Correlation Necessary.

This suggests another fundamental principle of a good course of study, a close observance of the natural relations among the various subjects studied and the various activities engaged in. In life nothing

stands alone, all is related; so in the true school, which is a microcosm, an epitome of life.

The purpose of a course of study for elementary schools may be summarized as follows:

Course of Study Must Supply Working Material.

A course of study for elementary schools should supply the teachers with working material which they may employ in the training of the children. Its business is not to state in definite terms just what the teacher is to do each day, but rather to map out in a broad way those activities, exercises, and fields of knowledge which experience has shown to be most suitable for the elementary school, and to suggest to the teachers methods of enlarging this work and of preparing themselves to perform it. It should take into consideration such facts concerning children as the study of child life has made clear, the character of the civilization in which the child is to be a factor, and the means necessary to make him a most effective voluntary factor for good in his community. It must supply such activities as will best stimulate growth, such discipline as will produce the finest culture and make it possible for him to express himself adequately for the benefit of others; it must suggest such knowledge as will help him to take hold of nature effectively and comprehend what others have done and expressed. It must involve also such a vital acquaintance with social, economic, and ethical conditions as is required for good citizenship.

First, Get the Pupils at Work.

The principles outlined above for the occupations of the schoolroom being accepted, the teacher has a working basis for the organization of the school. His first business is to get the pupils at work in rational and educative employment adapted to their needs. If the school be one of a graded system the work for the

different pupils will be similar, if not uniform; there will still be need for the study of individual conditions, but the general plan will be predetermined, and the material at hand.

If the school be a rural or ungraded one the task of initial organization will be much more difficult. Here the work will be largely individual and the consideration of the needs of single pupils will force itself at once upon the teacher's attention. Here, too, it is especially difficult to preserve the social unity of the school community. Diversity of age, attainment, and work tend to undue accentuation of the individual and to unfortunate loss of social motive. While in the graded school the danger is that the individual will be so merged in the social whole as to lose his distinct personal claim to attention and the recognition of his right to individual development, in the rural school common activities must be devised and encouraged and common interests aroused. In the graded school, individual activities, work for individual ends, must be planned, and the tastes, needs, and aptitudes of individual children must be noted and provided for. For in both, the end, social efficiency, must be kept in mind, and this requires the fullest development of individual power and the fullest comprehension of social relations and obligations. Each is necessary to the other. The individual is fully developed only in society, and society prospers only when its individual members are full-grown.

Graded and Ungraded Schools Compared.

Hence, the school, whether graded or ungraded, must be so organized as properly to balance the individual and social demands of true education.

The administration of the school must also provide that both divisions of the course of study receive due attention —

the body of knowledge and the range of activities. The process of education may be described as growth through nutrition and exercise, or, as more commonly put, through learning and expression. Hence these two kinds of effort must be duly provided for, not only in the course of study, but also in the administration of the school. Indeed, they cannot be separated. There is no learning without corresponding expression. Memorizing is not, necessarily, learning at all in the true sense. Unless the whole mind is employed there is no nutrition. Consequently, there is enormous waste in our educational processes. Where expression is ignored the learning is bogus; it does not enter into the make-up of the mind. In such schools, only when acquisition in the school is supplemented by the activities of the life out of school is there true learning at all, and, as this supplementing is casual and unreliable, it is evident that much of the effort of the schoolroom is wasted.

Education is Growth Through Nutrition.

Expression Necessary to Learning.

So the school must provide an abundance of activities which shall utilize and make vital, through expression, the matter presented for learning.

The greatest lack of our schools to-day seems to me to be that of suitable provision for just this serious productive work by the pupils. Studying is still too largely mere committing to memory rather than such an application of the mind to vital problems as shall employ all its powers and produce real, as distinguished from verbal, knowledge. Pupils in the average school do not do enough of real work. They spend hours enough, use up nervous energy enough, get tired enough, but they do not work enough. Provision must be made in the school

Lack of Productive Work.

for a sufficient amount of independent, strength-producing work. This means that the school must be so organized that each pupil may have the opportunity and be compelled to work alone and unaided upon problems that bring into use all his energies, producing results that appeal to him as worth producing.

THE GRADED SCHOOL

Danger of Loss in the Machine.

Let us consider first the graded school. As has been pointed out, one of the principal dangers of this school is that the child may be swallowed up by the machine; that the social whole may so absorb the individual that his effort for individual ends may be discouraged.

MASS TEACHING

Teacher Doing Work for Pupils.

Another grave danger of the graded school is that the teacher may do the work for the children. Where mass teaching prevails the teacher is likely to be so anxious to push along the required work, to keep the class moving together, that the single child has no opportunity to labor with the feeling that he must, himself, work out his own salvation. The teacher is always there, ready to supply the deficiencies of the weak, himself supplementing the child's effort, that the beautiful uniformity of the class gradation may not be broken.

The most pernicious form of mass teaching is found in those schools in which the entire roomful of children does the same things at the same time — recites together, studies together, with the teacher always present, helping, suggesting, telling. These schools represent the complete absorption of the individual. They do not stand for even good social

training, which develops the individual as fully as possible for social efficiency; for social efficiency requires completely educated, self-directing individuals able to use all the strength of individuality for social ends.

Mass teaching so completely subordinates the individual that his efforts become mechanical. He cannot move alone; he moves with the mass. He is not self-directing; he has no power of initiative; he follows a leader, if there is one; if not, he follows the crowd.

THE GROUP SYSTEM

The Group System of organization in large graded schools is almost necessary to this development of personal power. It is impossible and undesirable to have each pupil work altogether independently. That would be the other extreme. But it is both possible and desirable to have the school so organized into groups that both the social and the individual training necessary shall be secured.

Advantage of Groups.

The number of groups will depend, naturally, upon the size of the school, its grade, and the character of the work to be done. In primary grades there should be more groups than in the grammar grades. A primary grade of forty or fifty pupils may profitably be divided into three or four groups. The grouping, to a considerable degree, should be according to ability to do the work. This facilitates frequent promotion and gives the individual a chance. The differences will be slight and children can be moved from one group to another, according to their particular needs, without causing undue elation or a sense of degradation.

More important still, it makes possible such work, both social and individual, as a wise education requires.

These groups should be employed in different occupations. The teacher should be busy with one, in what is commonly called the recitation, an exercise wherein that which has been accomplished by the children working alone is tested, instruction given, suggestion offered, employment outlined for the future, and, in general, that directive and inspirational work done which is the teacher's commonly recognized function.

The Recitation the Test.

This is the test period, which, perhaps more than any other, shows to the teacher, and to the children themselves, the value and meaning of the work of the school. It is the time for interchanging thought, for clarifying ideas, for informing minds. But this recitation period can attain its highest effectiveness only when the other work has been skilfully directed and well done.

A group as small as ten or fifteen can be in very close relations with the teacher during the recitation period. Each individual child can receive considerable attention and can become really known by the teacher. A teacher with forty-five primary pupils, in forty-five minutes, can do very much more for each child if she spends fifteen minutes with each of three groups than if she has them all for forty-five minutes together, and, besides this, each child can have had thirty minutes of quiet individual work, undisturbed by the iteration of the teacher.

Work by Groups not Reciting.

The groups not engaged in recitation should be at work by themselves. This work should, of course, be planned and directed by the teacher, but she should, while they are busy upon it, be absent from the children's minds, as completely as possible. They should be absorbed in the work.

With the lower primary grades this work should be largely

that which brings into play motor activities, some form of expression work — writing, drawing, painting, modeling in sand or clay, construction, blackboard work — some form of activity in which the children develop and express ideas connected with and suggested by the course of study and the recitation exercises of the day. The changes should be of sufficient frequency to avoid undue fatigue, and the problems should be "real" and educative. This occupation should not be play, but should be serious work, tending toward the end of the school, *growth through nutrition and exercise.*

Employment of Motor Activities.

Children so organized and directed will work with genuine joy and earnestness, realizing that they are accomplishing something worth while. Such an arrangement also solves the question of the so-called "discipline" of the school; but I will speak of that later.

A roomful of children thus occupied, one group eagerly busy with the teacher in the recitation, while the others are working by themselves—one group at a blackboard solving problems in arithmetic, another at their desks writing a language exercise, or standing about a large table, painting, or, perhaps, gathered about a "sand table," working out together, with the sand and cardboard and other constructive material, the story of the Trojan war, all eager and absorbed in the work in hand, while the teacher, gently and almost unobserved, guides it all — such a school forms a beautiful and inspiring spectacle. And the best of it is, children so engaged are receiving real education. They are exercising their minds independently and yet in society. They are gaining strength and the power of self-direction through self-direction. They are developing thought

and are expressing it, thus making the facts they learn nutritive.

In higher grades two groups are enough. The pupils here are capable of longer continued exertion. There is, necessarily and properly, more conning of books. There is less need of frequent motor activity. There is more of what we commonly call study, and this can be continued for longer periods of time. Nor is there quite the same need for the close, individual attention of the teacher possible in the smaller groups.

Number of Groups.

In grammar grades of forty pupils, two classes of twenty each, with half-hour recitation periods, produce excellent results. There is here abundant opportunity for unaided study, a prerequisite of mental strength, and there is time in plenty for recitation purposes.

Naturally, many of the exercises of the schoolroom are better carried on by the whole school together. Such are music, formal drawing lessons — all exercises which do not require individual recitations, but in which all pupils necessarily take part during the whole time. Such general exercises are valuable, also, for social training and should on no account be neglected. But most of the school work can be more successfully carried on in groups. In particular this plan makes possible that unaided, individual work which is absolutely necessary for the development of power.

Such an arrangement as has been outlined necessitates careful preparation on the part of the teacher; it requires organization to prevent waste. Material for the work of the different groups must be at hand. Plans for its distribution at the proper times must be made. The teacher must be alert and ready. But the care is compensated for in the interest produced,

Need of Careful Preparation.

the power of self-direction developed, and the superior order resulting.

THE UNGRADED SCHOOL

In the ungraded school a different sort of organization is required. Combination, rather than segregation, is needed here. Children should be grouped upon such common problems as are possible. They may be problems of nature study, for which abundant material is at hand. They may be problems of construction, the making of simple pieces of apparatus for the use of the school, or the maintaining of school gardens for the study of simple agricultural or horticultural questions. Or the common work may be the making and solving of arithmetical problems relating to the school or the community life, such as measurements and computations for the construction of buildings for rural use, or the laying out of land for gardens or farms. It may be the study of geography or history or literature, to which each child contributes what he has been able to learn through his personal investigation or research.

Co-operative Exercises in Ungraded School.

In the ungraded school especial care should be taken with the general exercises in which the whole school is engaged — singing, drawing, debates, spelling-matches, special oratorical and declamatory exercises of various kinds. The children should be led to do co-operatively as many things as possible, each contributing his share.

For social training, in all schools, much use may properly be made of special days — such days as the birthdays of authors and statesmen and other prominent persons. The decoration of school rooms and school grounds, too, offers fine opportunities for community work of an altruistic sort.

Children should be led to see that social betterment comes through the combined efforts of many, each contributing his share. I cannot refrain from repeating, *education is to develop social efficiency in individuals, and this comes through the developing of individual power by means of work in co-operation.*

CHAPTER III

The Morale of the School

In the preceding chapter the occupations of the school were discussed as being the key to the entire school life, the first thing which the teacher must consider and the one thing which must be rightly conducted, if the school is to fulfil its function. We will now consider in particular the conduct of children in school, its kind, the motives which should underlie it, and the observance of proper conventionalities.

There are many erroneous notions and there is much false preaching on the subject of what is called "school discipline," meaning the preservation of order. The great struggle with the majority of teachers is to keep order; more teachers fail in this respect than in any other, and many of them fail largely because of their strenuous attempts to succeed in this one line as if, order being Heaven's first law, it were the one thing for which children come to school. The "discipline" of the school is in a manner separated from the work of the school and made a particular feature, and some teachers boast with more pride of their success in keeping order than of their success in teaching.

School "Discipline" sometimes Overrated.

There are a few fundamental principles underlying this whole question of school "discipline" which it is well to study, although they are not new. Conduct rests upon

two classes of motives which in most of us are so inextricably mixed that we cannot distinguish one from the other. One is convention and the other the inner law of right based upon reason.

Conventions and Law of Right.

CONVENTION

Convention is necessary to the smooth running of the social machine. People who must live together, of necessity must have certain conventions; there must be agreement, at least as to the externals of life, but these conventions, to be really valuable, must be founded upon rational motive.

Value of Conventions.

It is sometimes said that there are two motives which prompt the keeping of order in school. One is to secure conditions suitable for doing the work of the school, and the other is to insure a training in morals. The distinction is unwise. If the conventions of the school are essential to good work, obedience to them constitutes a training in good morals; if they are not essential to good work in the school, insistence upon obedience to them means training in bad morals. Much evil arises from the fact that the conventions upon which stress is laid are frequently not essential to the well-being of the school, but are purely or partially arbitrary.

The conventions of the school most commonly named are silence, punctuality, attention, and prompt obedience. These are all, directly or indirectly, connected with morals according to the circumstances. Silence, for instance, may be a virtue or it may not. In those instances in which noise would interfere with the study of the pupils or with the recitation, silence is necessary, and to enforce it is to train in good morals; but teachers are quite too apt to love it for its own

sake and to insist upon it when it has no bearing upon the well-being of the school. Silence suggests death, and among the deadest schools I have ever seen have been those in which arbitrarily, without cause, silence was always enforced.

This is hardly the place to discuss the foundations of morality in detail since this would involve more time and more far-reaching controversy than is the purpose of this book. But in general it may be said that the term morality is a purely relative term; it has to do with the relations of men with men. A solitary being, if such a being could be imagined, would be without morals. If we accept the very simplest definition of morality, namely right conduct, we must admit that conduct is right or wrong solely with reference to its end and the relations involved. What is right at one time and place may be wholly wrong at another.

Morality a Relative Term.

Every phase of life, every social institution, must of necessity have its own rules of conduct. These rules are usually crystallized into conventions. People who are associated in any definite enterprise, or for any purpose, for a length of time, naturally discover what kind of conduct best makes for the ends of the association, and out of this recognition ultimately grows a set of rules or conventions, sometimes formulated and sometimes not formulated, which govern the members of the association. In a sense they enforce themselves. Those who violate them interfere with the success of the organization and are compelled either to leave it or to conform to its regulations.

Conventions for Special Phases of Life.

In a business house for instance, there are conventions which make it possible to carry on business successfully, — regulations as to the hours of service, as to the recognition

of the authority of those who are in responsible positions, and as to what each one is to do and at what times and in what ways. These rules are local in bearing and limited in their significance. They would not apply to a church or a theater. The church, too, has its conventions which grow out of the conditions involved. People who meet to worship together, realizing the need of such conditions as tend to secure a worshipful mind, insist that all who come must conduct themselves accordingly. There must be a quiet, reverential attitude, certain participation in the exercises, and a general co-operation in securing the purpose of the assemblage. In a theater or in a public lecture-room where we go to listen to what one or more people are saying, there is required a different sort of conduct, but one which fits the occasion. So in a school certain conventions are necessary. Teachers must be able to teach and children to study and recite without being disturbed by others. There are, moreover, conventions of a wider reach, those that belong to the business world as a whole or to the religious world as a whole.

Conventions Rest upon Fundamental Principles.

Now, these conventions are not the mere fabrications of ingenious people foisted upon the members of the organization or association, nor are they artificial, though they may seem so. In the first instance they rest upon certain fundamental principles which are the basis of sound morality; these are the right of all people to perform any legitimate act without being interfered with unduly by others, and the obligation resting upon all to respect that right in others. Such conventions not only rest upon sound principles, but they are absolutely necessary to the smooth running of the world's machinery.

Primarily the word morals means manners. Good morals are good manners or good methods of conduct in relation to other people, and are based upon the obligation of all people to help all others, to facilitate all useful activity, and to make the world, in so far as possible, a desirable and pleasant place to live in. Good table manners, for instance, are distinctly good morals, and bad table manners are bad morals as distinctly as are the grosser violations of what are commonly recognized as moral laws. Good manners make the world a happier and better place to live in, facilitate profitable and agreeable intercourse among people and render easier the accomplishment of the world's work.

Manners and Morals.

The man who steals does wrong, of course. He interferes with his neighbor's rights; but the man who, by bad manners, disturbs an audience in a church or lecture-room or theater, or passengers in a street car, or pedestrians upon a sidewalk, or students in a school, also does wrong. He interferes with the right of others to the pursuit of happiness and to that peace of mind which is necessary to the accomplishment of the best work. This is the moral basis for moral conventions and for all those regulations which, whether written or unwritten — more commonly the latter — are universally recognized as guides in the intercourse of human beings. In all cases their value is tested by their fitness.

It is true that in school and in other places conventions sometimes become fetiches, the mere form of good conduct takes the place of the spirit of it, artificial Chesterfieldian manners are substituted for kindly interest in the well-being of others, and for such conduct as makes it possible for others to do their work best, which constitute really good manners. When so

Conventions Sometimes Fetiches.

substituted the moral element is lost. Such manners, while sometimes desirable, have no deep foundation, and it is to be borne in mind that all rules of conduct are valuable only in so much as they further some worthy end. Consequently in school it is impossible to separate the conventions which make for the well-being and successful administration of the school from those rules of conduct which are supposed to make for character. These two are one, and in determining what kind of conduct should be required in school we need to go no further than to ascertain the purpose of the school.

CHARACTER THE PRODUCT OF LIFE

If the purpose of the school is worthy and high the conduct that furthers it will make for good character. If the purpose of the school is not high and worthy, and if conduct therein is supported merely by artificial conventions, it is impossible to add any system of rules that will contribute to the building of good character. Character is the result of the life lived, and the life lived is one. There is altogether too great a tendency, especially in the fields of ethics and religion, to seek to separate that conduct which has to do with the common affairs of life from that which has to do with what is sometimes called the higher morality.

Character is Conduct Crystallized.

The life we live in pursuing the common necessary ends is both determined by and determines our characters. As was pointed out in the preceding chapter, it is impossible to separate character from occupation. It is what we do daily and continually when pursuing our vocations, when not thinking of moral questions, that shows what we are and crystallizes conduct into character.

I have said that the school is a social organization; its end is social efficiency, and whatever of moral training there is in a school must be in the life of the school and not in some extraneous system of instruction tacked on to its other employments. Hence in order to secure to children in school the proper moral training, the school itself must be a proper institution. Its ends must be high and its occupation must be both noble and ennobling; they must so exercise the whole child that inevitably he is led into high living. The term "discipline," much misused in relation to school life, is a bogy, because teachers too commonly seek to separate conduct in the school from occupation.

Moral Training Product of Life.

THE SOURCES OF DISORDER

In schools that are really disorderly the trouble is usually to be found in one or more of three common conditions: the character of the teacher, which may be positively bad, merely weak and unimpressive, or ultra-sentimental; the character of the work required, which may be either upon a low plane or so presented to the children that they fail to see the good in it and to realize its worth; the enforcement of conventions resting upon no sound moral principle. The last mentioned has already been sufficiently considered.

Sources of Disorder in School.

As to the first, nothing need be said here, except for the sake of the ultra-sentimentalists who fail to recognize the necessity of any control in a school if the work is interesting. I have seen teachers with high ideals and really noble views of education fail utterly because of their lack of will or because they have not sought to impress themselves upon the school. An organization must have a head, and in all

associations of people for a common end there must be some directing force, and as practically all associations contain some unfortunates with diseased wills, due frequently to bad training in early life, authority is needed either to control or to expel these makers of mischief. Even in the freest schools there must be felt the pervasive presence of the teacher. Such presence does not interfere with the development of the individual or the cultivation of self-control. It is simply necessary to secure social harmony. A teacher does not need to be a boss. Bossism is fatal to the higher ends of the school. But a teacher must have will and be able to exercise it vigorously though wisely for the common good.

OBEDIENCE

Obedience a Temporary Necessity.

It may be well to say here something upon the subject of obedience, in order that what I may say later may not be misunderstood. Obedience is not in itself a virtue, it may be a weak vice, but it is in almost all societies an occasional and often a continual necessity. In the school where the teacher is dealing with young and growing minds, obedience must be maintained; in order that the essential conditions of a good school may be secured it is a preliminary necessity, a crutch to aid the weak until able to walk alone, but it should be used sparingly. The teacher should not require it for its own sake, but merely to secure necessary conditions and to make the children ready to control themselves. It should always lead to self-control and should gradually be dropped out of sight as the power of self-direction is secured, but it must still be potentially present and ready for use in emergencies. Pupils must obey when it is necessary, even unquestioningly,

but they should never be called upon to obey unquestioningly unless it is necessary, and such obedience should, in so far as possible, rest upon faith in the superior wisdom of the teacher. The business of the teacher is to secure not merely temporary conditions, but permanent conditions, and so to train the children to work from motive that they can and will do this when the teacher's directing and controlling power is removed. In short, children must mind. It is natural to rebel against authority when it is not exercised for any evident good motive, and children are eminently natural. In the school in which there are an abundance of red tape, innumerable petty rules of order and rigid enforcement of compliance thereto, there are always rebellion, at least potential, and actual deceit and hypocrisy.

Evil Effects of Martinet Discipline.

The natural tendency above mentioned prompts children to seek to subvert the will of the martinet disciplinarian, openly if they dare, by deception if they do not. Rigidly enforced rules without an evident, worthy reason behind them are fatal to character in those who are subject to them. A teacher should be very slow in making rules and should always ask, before promulgating one, "Is it absolutely necessary to the well-being of this society? Could not the end aimed at be secured in some other way and can it be secured in this way?" For we must not forget that children should live in school a sane life for ends which appeal to them, that they may lead such lives after they leave school.

I recall in a western city a school which was famous for its "discipline." The pupils always moved with machine-like uniformity; everything was done beautifully so far as the eye could see; silence was rigidly maintained; all the petty conventions that ingenuity could devise were enforced

with the method of the martinet and, as with Katisha's shoulder, people came from miles around to see it. A change of administration brought to light the inner condition of the school. The moral sense of the pupils had been impaired; lying and whispering, having been treated with equal severity, had come to be regarded by them as equally heinous or venial crimes, and you may be sure the children leaned toward veniality. It took some years of comparatively bad order to bring about a rational moral sense in that school.

As to the third point, it is not enough that the work of the school be on the whole wise and well planned. It must be so presented to the children that it will appeal to them as worth while; otherwise they will lose the best kind of moral training, which comes from working for worthy ends. Children who are simply doing what they are told to do, even if that is conventionally right, are not acquiring moral power. They must understand the motive, and if it is worthy must be ready to make effort, to drudge, to sacrifice for it, if they are to receive sound moral training.

Children must Realize Value of Work.

CHAPTER IV

THE MORALE OF THE SCHOOL (Continued)

THE conduct required in school must grow out of the life of the school and must evidently further the ends of the school, if such conduct is to result in sound character. This means that the school itself should be upon a high plane, that the life lived should be worthy, and that the employments, which are the key to the whole life, should be such as appeal to children as worth their while.

Going to School Not Necessarily Disagreeable.

Children go to school to learn. This is the common statement and in the main it is sufficiently accurate for our purpose. That is, they go to school to be nourished by truth, strengthened by exercise. Going to school should be no more unpleasant to children than going to any other place where choice leads them. Learning, that is, mental growth, is no more unnatural than bodily growth, and the act of taking mental nourishment and of engaging in mental exercise is as natural and should be as agreeable as taking bodily nourishment or engaging in bodily exercise. And it will be so to sane children if it is adapted to them, if it fills their lives. One trouble with the school life is that it is only partially filled by the school occupation and for much of the time the mind is vagrant. Much of the work forced upon children fails to interest them because it fails to supply any felt need.

Let it not be thought that this book advocates making work interesting by artificial devices or amusing children to persuade them to study. By the term interest I mean that vital earnestness in accomplishing an end which the successful man has in his business or which the child has when playing a game. Children are as desirous of doing things as their elders. School too often fails in that there is nothing given them to do that seems to them to lead to any definite end or to "amount to anything." We are told that children must of necessity learn the expressive arts, reading, writing, and the rest, and so they must and readily will, if these lead to an apparent end, but young children must have a motive, and a motive immediate and apparent. It is hard enough for adults to work in the dark for remote ends; it is too much to expect of children. The teacher must have the remote end in mind, but to the child the immediate end appeals. If he feels that through studying a lesson he is gaining some desirable result, either in power among his fellows or in personal enlargement, if he sees, for example, that by reading he is placed in possession of means to reach some desired end, it is not difficult to interest him in learning his lesson; but until he has some interest in what can be secured through reading, learning to read does not appeal strongly to him. The same principle applies to all the arts.

Interest a Vital Matter.

School life then must be based upon occupation which has a meaning to the children. Courses of study must be rich in substance. It is not enough to have the school occupation consist wholly in the exercise of memory, "learning things" in the common sense. Supplementary to this are doing, expressing, putting into definite form or into actual use that

Courses of Study Rich in Substance.

which is learned. The child who is learning the principles of language must first have something to express and be filled with the desire to express it well.

The place of manual training and drawing and painting is found when we consider them as expressive arts, new means by which the child makes tangible and effective his ideas, for growth depends as much upon exercise as upon food, and the two are co-ordinate and essential in the occupation of the true school. All the various forms of work fit into their proper places. Ideas are stimulated and then expressed, desires created and then satisfied. Children are employed in that which holds their attention, because through it they may hope to attain some worthy purpose.

Growth Depends upon Exercise.

The excellence of the school is too often measured by the success with which the children sit still rather than by the success with which they do things. This recalls the experience of Dr. John Dewey when looking for school desks for his experimental school. After visiting many dealers and failing to find what he wanted, he was asked by one to explain his need. He did so. The dealer said at once, "Why, you want a desk for children to work at; these are all for listening." And listening has been altogether too much the business of the school from the children's side.

In a previous chapter reference was made to the dangers of mass teaching, and group work was advocated. What was there said has a direct bearing upon moral training. In a school conducted on this plan the individual not only loses his individuality for the time, but he loses the best opportunity for a certain most valuable moral training. The power to do solitary,

Power to Work Alone.

unaided, persistent work for a worthy end is absolutely necessary, not only to business success, but to sound character. This power is not required in such schools. Every child, if he is to be strong morally, that is, able to stand alone and meet and overcome moral obstacles, should, during his period of school training, do much work alone, metaphysically removed an infinite distance from the helping teacher. It should be a part of the morale of the school to encourage this independent, solitary work, just as in society the busy world must provide room for the individual worker and must keep out of his way. For although morality has to do with society and nothing else, this does not mean that the individual is never to be alone, or, if alone, cannot do right.

SOCIAL FREEDOM

Social freedom requires self-restraint. The members of society are not free unless they put checks upon themselves, for anarchy is the worst foe of freedom. In a state of anarchy everybody is in everybody else's way and no one finds himself free to do anything. So a busy school, while not necessarily or ordinarily an especially quiet school, is as far removed from anarchy as the heavens from the earth.

Social Freedom Requires Self-Restraint.

But still further, pupils in school should not only keep out of one another's way, but at times should positively help one another. That is a function which in a school of rigid "discipline" is not deemed possible. It is true that children must work out their own salvation, and yet co-operation in which one mind stimulates the others and supplements the others is a necessary condition of society, and there is no reason why

Pupils should Help One Another.

it should not exist in school. In the recitation, naturally there is friction of minds and the supplementing of each by all the others. But there is no reason why in the working out of problems in different subjects there should not be like co-operation. Such co-operation is a most useful exercise in training for social life. It is very easy to secure it in such subjects as manual training. I remember some boys in a manual training high school making a roll-top desk for the superintendent of schools. I do not remember just how many boys were engaged upon this piece of work, but perhaps twenty, each one making some one part of the desk, upon some of the more difficult parts two or three working together. Those parts had to be made so that they would fit. There was necessarily constant consultation and comparison and suggestion of one to another. It was a fine instance of team work and the result was not merely a beautiful desk but an abundance of the best sort of training for social life. It was highly moral training. A football team has much the same training. Great enterprises require the exercise of many brains, and practice in co-operation is most valuable.

Mr. Carnegie said recently that to make millionaires it was absolutely essential to take into partnership competent heads of departments. That means, as I understand it, that a great business is developed not by the brain of one man alone, but rather by the co-operation of many. Certainly the social life of a community is successful only when many members work together in harmonious co-operation. And training for this can be given in the schools and should be given. Not only in the manipulation of the shop is it possible, but in innumerable exercises. Investigations can be carried on in geography

Importance of Co-operation.

or history or the natural sciences, one pupil investigating one field and another another, all bringing in the results of their investigations and compiling them into a single product. The essential feature is that each one shall feel his personal responsibility for the whole and shall meet it by doing his part. If all the members of a community felt a personal responsibility for the well-being of the community we should at once have an ideal condition.

All pupils of a school should come to feel a personal responsibility for the well-being of the school. They should feel that it is their institution, that it exists for them all and not for the teacher alone. And they should be led to restrain themselves from interference with one another and to contribute with their best to the common good, and this condition should grow out of the occupation of the school, which should have a definite meaning to the children. Matthew Arnold's oft-quoted remark, "Conduct is three fourths of life," might be supplemented by another, that occupation is the key to conduct. It may be necessary for the teacher, on assuming control of a new school, for a very brief time to control the school by absolute will, but if it is done for more than a very brief time the result will be distinctly bad. Common interest must take the place of personal domination if the children are to be trained for society.

Responsibility for Common Good.

The morale of the school must grow out of what the children do. Indeed, it does grow out of it. If the children do not do things worthy and have not enough work set by the teacher to employ their minds, they will do other things unworthy, in violation of the teacher's will or in ignorance of it, which will give a distinctly lower morale than is desirable.

It is impossible to escape the truth that occupation largely

determines conduct, and conduct both grows out of and produces character.

I desire to call attention to one corollary of what has already been said regarding moral training. The use of secondary ends as motives to conduct is always to be restricted to an immediate and pressing emergency. It should never be a continuous part of the school discipline. By secondary ends in school I mean prizes, marks, and punishments. The reasons are not far to seek. They concern, however, the whole field of ideals. The trouble with the world in so far as it is wrong is, of course, that people are pursuing wrong ends, commonly minor or secondary ends, under the mistaken notion that they are primary. People chase wealth, social position, and political power for themselves and so enter upon an endless pursuit and are never happy. These objects pursued are elusive because they are not real; they are means to ends and are not properly ends at all, or are merely secondary ends. Do we do right to wonder at the perversity of humanity in thus following unworthy ends when we see that in most schools secondary ends are held before the children until their pursuit becomes habitual? How can we expect children who have been taught to study for marks or prizes or to avoid punishment, instead of pursuing, with a live interest, knowledge itself, to acquire a love for truth? How can we expect such children, when they grow up, to pursue social service through the use of available means, instead of pursuing these means as if they were the ends themselves?

Dangers of Secondary Ends.

By holding up prizes and marks before children as the ends of study, we substitute an inferior pleasure for the true joy of genuine attainment, and worse than all create the

habit of such pursuit. There are natural defectives, or those in whom the moral sense and any deep interest are simply inchoate, who must be treated like invalids, and for such, a secondary end as an inducement may be necessary; but it is absurd to say that a school of normally healthy children must be induced to study by the offer of a prize or the fear of punishment. That is a part of the silly nonsense that is taught by those who have spoiled their schools through excess of conventionality. Normal children are more readily attracted to what is worthy than to what is unworthy, and it is quite as easy for a good teacher to arouse interest in the real ends of school life as in the secondary ends, and the result is much more desirable.

Marks and Prizes.

CHAPTER V

The Individual Child

The test of the efficiency of a school system, or a school, is the excellence of the training given the individual children. While there is a certain wasteful method of instruction which we call "mass teaching," *mass learning* is inconceivable. In mass teaching the class is reduced nearly to a company of children in a listening attitude. Much of the teacher's effort is necessarily wasted. It is like shooting at a flock of birds with an old-fashioned smooth-bore, "scattering" shot-gun. There is not sufficient opportunity for individual response to make it sure that even the listening is actual and effective. A quiet body with the eyes directed toward the teacher often conceals a vacant mind. There is almost no possibility of that vigorous reaction which is the essential of all learning. If the minds of the pupils do not actively respond, and, stimulated by the teaching, put out some effort in grasping the thing taught and relating it to its proper apperceiving center, or, better yet, in some expressive or productive effort, then there is no learning, and if the mind of any individual pupil does not so respond, the teaching in so far fails of effectiveness.

Mass Teaching.

Learning Requires a Reaction.

Some teachers are more successful than others in stimulating individual minds to activity, though giving "mass"

instruction. But even the strongest teachers cannot accomplish the impossible, which is, in this instance, to secure the reaction necessary to learning when conditions forbid such reaction.

Solitary Learning Also Futile.

The mind of each child must move vigorously to some end, if it is truly to learn. This would seem to look toward the teacher with the single pupil as the ideal school. But this again ignores the other great essential of education, life in society. As has been repeatedly said, if social efficiency is the end of education, and if the life lived is the one educative force, social education can come only through social living, and the school must be a society of many members. The best results cannot be produced in solitude. There must be reaction against the social environment as well as the intellectual, to produce the socially efficient.

The Teacher must Reconcile the Two Demands.

How then can the two demands be reconciled? I have no specific to offer, but some suggestions. Much will naturally depend upon the wisdom and vigilance of the teacher. He must see that in so far as possible, even under bad conditions, individual attention is real and individual reaction stimulated and allowed scope. He must have an eye for the pupils who are slow of comprehension or mentally somnolent, and must give special attention to rousing them. Sometimes it will require a patient and long siege, sometimes a mental shock, such as may be produced by the bomb of a question accurately aimed, or a startling statement, or a personal reference full of explosive. The vigilant teacher can certainly do much even under unfavorable conditions.

But the bad conditions may themselves sometimes be

removed by the teacher. I have already spoken of the "group method" of classification as a partial solution of the problem. It offers the best plan within the control of the teacher for training the individual in society. Indeed it supplies very well two essential conditions. **The Group Method.**

Of course the first essential is not within the control of the individual teacher, but must be cared for by the boards of education. I mean the reduction of the number assigned to any teacher to a reasonable maximum.

But no matter what the number of children, they should be divided into groups for work. These groups should be so small that the teacher may be aware of the sort of attention given by each child, and may secure from each responses sufficiently frequent and full to make plain what sort of reactions are produced. With small groups of children in close touch with one another and the teacher, some reactions are inevitable; for efforts at expression are constant and made by all. Each has something to do all the time. The difference between forty children in a first-year class all sitting in their seats, holding readers, while one at a time rises and performs, and a group of ten or fifteen gathered about the teacher, each one reading frequently, while all are intent on the exercise, is the difference between solitude and society, because the pupils sitting in their seats are really isolated and not engaged in co-operative activity, while the group is a society working together. The difference is also the difference between idleness and profitable work. In the large class there are inevitably many vagrant minds, in the small group there need be none. **Reactions Inevitable in Groups.**

But possibly of even greater consequence to the develop-

ment of individual training is the work of the children in groups not "reciting." The great lack of most of our schools is a lack of productive activity. Such activity is the chief essential to learning. The reactions possible while merely listening are insignificant compared with those manifested in doing. The education of children during the first five or six years of life, before they come to school, is so much more economical and effective than that in school largely because it is mainly through doing.

Need for Productive Activity.

Ideas received find expression at once. The games of childhood are in the main merely the giving of adequate expression to ideas received, so making knowledge real. There is no fake learning on the playground; there is much of it in school.

The children in groups not reciting, if the school is well organized, are all doing something. It may be memorizing, which is commonly called studying. It may be really grasping the thought from a book, but more commonly it will be expression or production, writing or drawing or painting to make clear a thought, constructing in plastic or solid material some object to illustrate an idea. In any case it is individual mental work, whose results are sure to show later in the recitation.

Some form of productive work, whether with pen, pencil, brush, scissors and paper, or carpenter's tools, is the individual's chance. It compels mental activity; it assures at least some learning. It also discloses to the teacher the pupil's mental state. The thing portrayed or made often speaks much more plainly of the state of mind than the spoken words; though of course all these forms of reaction must be stimulated and utilized.

Productive Work the Individual's Chance.

The motive of all such plans as the one outlined is to make sure that all the children's minds are working, and not merely that of the teacher or of the single child who chances to be "reciting," and this can be assured only when there is work that each *necessarily* does.

In certain exercises, such as singing and writing, each child of necessity does his own work, whether there are two or two hundred, but in the greater number of school exercises this is not true. Hence the wise teacher will use every means to secure this individual activity.

Such activity is necessary for the growth of individual minds even if they are all normal and evenly developed. But no school is composed of normal and evenly developed minds. The variation is as great as the number of the individuals. Should the school take account of all these irregularities and treat each child independently, basing the course upon his state and his consequent needs? Is the school to be a pathological institution, each room a ward and each desk an invalid's cot? No, of course not; common sense is as important in school as elsewhere, and the golden mean is always found between the extremes, even in pedagogics.

What to Do with the Abnormal.

Most children are so nearly normal that no wide departure from regular standards is needed to meet the requirements of their growth. Taste will usually display aptitude or its lack, and in any fair and broad course of study there is abundant opportunity to give individual taste considerable scope without disturbing the regular order of things. This is particularly true if the children are grouped according to ability and attainment, and if there is much expressive and productive work. Every new expressive art added to the curriculum

The Majority Nearly Normal.

means just so much wider opportunity for the individual to develop along natural and characteristic lines. This is one of the chief values of manual training in its various forms, of music, art, productive language exercises, and, in the lower grades, of cutting, folding, cardboard construction, and sand-table illustration.

Most Children Need no Special Individual Training.

With these opportunities for self-expression and with reasonably observant teachers watching for the proper reactions from their effects, most children have all the individual training in school that is good for them. For it must be borne in mind that infant fancies and apparent tastes are not always criteria of aptitude.

Irregular development with its constantly changing curves for each child warns us not to base permanent courses of instruction too exclusively upon apparent abnormalities. Very careful observation over a considerable period at least should precede any assumption of marked irregularity.

The Curriculum Constitutes a Minimum.

The body of knowledge presented in the best elementary curricula includes little that is not as much needed by the child of marked individuality as by the strictly commonplace. This constitutes the minimum for all. It is in the field beyond this minimum that the opportunity is offered for the unusual child, both in the extent of knowledge open for study and in the range of expressive activities offered, especially the latter.

For instance, the child with an aptitude for history may be encouraged to go far beyond the minimum requirements in this study. His reading may be turned into this channel. The child with a love of nature may be sent afield to work for the whole class, whereas, the child with undeveloped

taste or aptitude for some particular line of work, as mathematics, may be allowed to pass on with only the minimum of attainment in this subject, *and without any special effort to spur the laggard powers.*

Be content to trust nature and to wait, and encourage each evidence of special talent to the fullest, adhering only to the general minimum of requirement in other subjects.

The Submerged Tenth.

But after all this has been done there still remains in most schools a small number, a submerged tenth, which falls below even a fair minimum standard. What shall be done with these? First ascertain whether any are too hopelessly deficient to be retained in school. They will fall into two classes, the permanently defective, and the children so badly undeveloped that their presence in the class is a menace to the well-being of the whole.

The Permanently Defective.

The permanently defective should, for their own good as well as for that of the school, be removed to some institution especially equipped to care for such. No teacher and no school should be burdened with them. In all states there are institutions for their care.

The Badly Undeveloped.

Those too badly undeveloped to be allowed to remain in the class, though not really defective, should be provided for in ungraded schools or ungraded rooms with carefully selected strong teachers, only a very few children to a teacher, who will study them and, by discovering and encouraging some taste or ability, patiently train their minds toward normality.

The Ungraded School.

Such schools will of course be equipped with manual training outfits, with means for nature study, and with apparatus for physical culture. They are the proper places for the phenomenally dull in all or several

lines, for those who through irregular training fit nowhere, and often for the troublesome and recalcitrant. For in-

The Recalcitrant.

ability or unwillingness to fit into the existing order of things, which usually constitutes bad conduct in school, is often in childhood merely an excessive development of certain interests and aptitudes and a retarded development of certain perceptions and adjustments. Truancy is usually due to an excess of interest over volitional development or self-inhibition.

The cure for many school vices is not punishment but the establishment of new interests, new relations, and new tendencies. The ungraded or *individual* school is often, under a strong and wise teacher, very successful in reaching such cases. Of course it is essential that the children should not regard it as a penal institution, and that is one reason for putting together the morally and the intellectually incapable.

There still remain the few in every class who are not defective enough to be forcibly removed, but who are not

The Dull.

able to do successfully the minimum of the work required. It would doubtless be better for these unfortunates if they could be taken from the over-full classroom of the public school, where they are subjected to embarrassing comparisons with other children, and placed in small private schools with teachers who have more time to devote to them than the hard-worked public school teacher can possibly give. But with many this is impossible and the teacher must accept the burden and do his best.

He must be patient and observant. The children must not be made unhappy because of natural defects. Almost all that can be done is to watch for evidences of interest and make the most of these. It may be necessary for these children to go over the work again, but not infrequently a

new value may be put into their lives if they can find themselves in some single line of activity or study.

I recall an instance told of one such child, who from his love for nature, first manifested in an interest in frogs, was led on until he became a fair student in other branches.

Often some employment about the school can be given to such pupils, which will increase their sense of personal dignity and stimulate a certain amount of brain activity.

Help them to self-possession and activity in every possible way, and then accept patiently the meager results, if possible, without rendering the children unhappy over their meagerness.

The Morally Dull.

With the morally defective, not bad enough to be excluded, a similar course is necessary. The first thing to establish is an interest in something worth while; usually they need moral perspective and a sense of responsibility. Proper and interesting employment will commonly cover the case. Often social duties for the school will impose the necessary sense of responsibility. I recall a principal who cured a bully by appointing him a sort of policeman to keep the big boys from bullying the little ones.

Occupation is the key to life. Those well employed in things that interest them have comparatively little temptation to mischief. "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do." Hands forcibly employed in work that does not appeal to their owner as worth while are equally ready for his Satanic majesty.

The Exceptionally Bright.

I have not referred specifically to the exceptionally bright pupil because his case is simpler. If he is given, in addition to the minimum of requirement, abundance of opportunity to go on in the lines of his strongest interests, he will do very well. There is so much

in each subject beyond the possible requirements of school, that there is surely enough in any of them for the most precocious mind.

Add to this the privilege of promotion to a higher grade whenever he is ready for it, and the bright pupil will not suffer, and will be in less danger of either one-sided development or priggishness than if taken out and coached as a genius.

To summarize, each pupil should be given the best that his peculiar individuality requires. Teaching should always result in a reaction in each mind taught. School should be so organized as to make this inevitable. But the good of the individual requires for his education not solitude, but society.

CHAPTER VI

Departmental Teaching

The phrase "departmental teaching" has come to have a technical meaning as applied to elementary schools, so that most teachers readily understand it without further definition. It means the abandonment of a plan which has generally prevailed in the elementary schools of this country, under which the class-room teacher has given instruction to her class in all subjects required by the curriculum for the grade, and the substitution therefor of a system of special teachers who give instruction in their particular subjects to the pupils of several classes or grades. This is nothing less than the extension of the plan of the college down through the secondary school, where it already largely prevails, into the elementary school.

As to the limits of this extension in the elementary school, there is no unanimity of opinion among the advocates of the plan. Some would include within its sweep all of the grades above the very lowest primary. Probably the greater number would stop with what are known generally as the higher grammar grades, that is, the highest two or three grades of the grammar school. In many private schools practically all of the instruction above the kindergarten grade is special, and a certain amount of specialization in public schools as far down as the fourth year of the school course is not unknown.

Differences of Departmental Teaching.

There is a wide difference of opinion among the advocates of departmental teaching as to the extent of this specialization. Some would include all subjects; that is, would have special teachers of reading, special teachers of arithmetic, of geography, and so on through the entire curriculum. Others would have specialization only in those subjects that are supposed to be very difficult and to require higher technical knowledge, such as geography and history, and others still would group the subjects according to some real or imaginary correlation.

A Variety of Methods.

The machinery, too, by which the various plans are carried out differs in various places. In some a very highly developed and fully organized scheme has been worked out, and in others the very crudest arrangements exist. Sometimes the teachers move from class to class to teach their subjects to the pupils. Sometimes the pupils move from room to room where the teachers of the different subjects are located. In a number of places buildings have been constructed especially for departmental work. The plan of these generally has been the grouping of small recitation rooms about large study rooms. But while there are all these differences in administration, the various advocates of departmental teaching agree in the main as to their reasons for favoring some plan of specialization in elementary teaching.

Many Teachers Opposed.

On the other hand, there are many teachers, and among them many of the most thoughtful, who are not greatly impressed with the advantages claimed for departmental teaching, and insist that the time-honored and prevalent plan of the single class-room teacher is better.

It is my aim here to state the principal arguments both

for and against departmental teaching, and to give my own conclusions and the reasons for them. The chief argument advanced by all friends of specialization is that thereby better teaching is secured; that the teacher who teaches a single subject is able to master it and become really, or approximately, a scholar in his own particular field, which is practically impossible for the teacher who has to prepare daily for a great variety of subjects. A teacher of history, for instance, may become a thorough and exact student of history, and may bring to the class an enthusiasm for the subject and a knowledge of its details which no class-room teacher, obliged to teach a dozen different subjects a day, can possibly attain, and as a result the children are likely to have a wider and better view of the subject and a greater interest in it, and are more likely to become readers and students of history themselves afterward, because of their contact with an enthusiast and a scholar on the subject. This argument is applied to all of the different subjects of the curriculum, and with much apparent force.

Higher Scholarship among Teachers Encouraged.

It is undoubtedly true that the teacher who teaches one subject only will secure, at least for a time, a greater interest in the subject, and will quite likely know more about it than the one who teaches several subjects. As a sort of corollary to this, it is claimed that the subjects will be pursued with greater thoroughness. It is also claimed that this plan furnishes an opportunity to the teachers to become specialists,— that is, to assume a higher professional position, and also to follow and develop their own aptitudes. It is taken for granted that in dividing up the corps of teachers of a school according to subjects, personal tastes and personal ability will be considered,— that is,

Teachers may Become Specialists.

the teacher who is most fond of history and can teach it best will be likely to be given history rather than mathematics, and that this arrangement will encourage the teacher to become still further a specialist in his subject.

Subjects will be Pursued more Systematically.

It is also argued that the different subjects pursued from year to year under the same teachers will be taught more systematically and that the frequent change of teachers, destroying continuity of effort, which is undoubtedly one of the greatest evils of our graded school system, will thus be avoided. The argument is just, and is one of the strongest in favor of a departmental system in the grades.

Children Brought into Contact with Many Minds.

A further argument is that departmental teaching brings the children into contact with a variety of minds at the same time, which is broadening; that if a child is subject to the influence of only one teacher for a length of time, his mind becomes unduly influenced by that of the teacher, if the teacher is a strong one; and if the teacher happens to be a weak one there is no relief whatever from his bad influence. Doubtless this is a strong argument. The child who happens to be placed for a year in the class-room under an inferior teacher who teaches badly all the subjects is undoubtedly a sufferer, whereas it is scarcely to be supposed that all of the teachers of the different subjects in one year will be bad, and so the pupil under departmental teaching is sure to come under the influence of one or more good minds and to have any tendencies to one-sidedness removed by coming into contact with many men of many minds.

As evidence of the force of all these arguments, their advocates point to the teachers of the college and high school, who are practically all specialists, where often great

enthusiasm is aroused in the individual subjects that they teach. This side of the question scarcely needs further elaboration, and may be summed up in a very few phrases: more highly specialized teachers, hence better teaching, greater thoroughness, and the broadening of the minds of the children by contact with the minds of various teachers.

On the other hand, the advocates of the prevailing system of class-room instruction deny most of the claims of the friends of specialization, and while they admit some of the advantages, they claim that they are more than overbalanced by the disadvantages. One of the most serious indictments of the departmental system is that it is destructive of the best qualities in teachers. This at first glance seems unreasonable, and it is certainly a direct contradiction of the claims of the advocates of the system.

But let us consider it. The best teacher is not necessarily the one who knows the most about his subject, though of course a thorough knowledge is desirable. In particular, the best teacher is not the one whose view of life is limited by his subject. A true knowledge of any subject involves all of its relations. It cannot be denied by thoughtful observers that the continual teaching of one subject, and especially of one phase of one subject, for a series of years, is destructive of the best mental power. Even in colleges, where the higher and broader phases of the different subjects are taught, it is proverbial that the professor becomes in time narrow and out of touch with the world. If he is a real teacher he must consider his subject and its relations to the class. This of itself limits him to certain elementary phases. If this is true of the college teacher, it is emphatically true of the elementary teacher, who is dealing constantly with inferior

Tends to Make Teachers Narrow.

minds, and who must modify the subject-matter of his department so as to adapt it to infant digestion. He inevitably in time takes a small and narrow view of what he is teaching. There is nothing in his work to broaden him, nothing even to broaden his interest in his subject. He has to gather a certain limited amount of knowledge of a single subject into condensed and palatable form and present this to children. This almost unavoidable effect of teaching a subject has never been more beautifully or pitifully described than in Charles Lamb's Schoolmaster.

Deadening Effects of Teaching One Subject.

In a previous chapter emphasis has been placed upon the superiority of the man to his shop, and attention has been called to the fact that it is only by constant effort and by dealing with continually broader influences that the individual can avoid being absorbed by his shop. Now the smaller the shop and the littler the thing with which one works, the more difficult is it to keep alive the spirit of true manhood and the right kind of interest in life. I can conceive of few things more deadening to the higher intellectual life than the teaching of some one subject year after year and day after day to children. For the first year or two after the introduction of departmental teaching into schools there may be evidences of brighter work, but wait a few years until the deadening effect of the limited field has become evident in the teachers. First is sure to come a loss of interest in the subject-matter as taught, then a loss of interest in teaching. The same subject is gone over year by year, vastly more knowledge has been arrived at by the teacher than can possibly be used in teaching in elementary schools, and so he becomes a mere routine teacher, having nothing in his work to stimulate ambition.

The corollary to this is a lack of breadth in the teaching. There may be a certain sort of narrow thoroughness, that is, certain details may be pursued to considerable lengths, but that kind of breadth which comes from relating the subject continually to every phase of life is gradually dropped out as the teacher becomes more and more absorbed in the special phases of his limited field. There is nothing so precious in all our school systems as the spirit of professional zeal and pride in the teachers resulting in their constant growth, and consequently nothing can be more serious than such an arrangement as will of itself in time unavoidably kill this.

Teachers of Subjects rather than Teachers of Youth.

We must not forget that proverbially the teacher of all grades is looked upon as ignorant of the world and is held in a sort of toleration and admiring contempt by the practical man of affairs. And we teachers must admit that this view is not altogether devoid of justice. I have referred to the occasional ignorance and self-satisfaction of the average college professor, and his frequent unfitness to deal with the problems of life. The complaint is quite general that the modern tendency toward specialization in colleges is making teachers of subjects rather than teachers of youth, and that the old-time college professor who was found here and there in all of the older colleges, — a man of broad culture, of many interests, able by the greatness of his personality to influence youth, is disappearing before the man who knows his Greek enclitic or his theory of curves perfectly.

We must admit sadly that these strictures upon the teaching profession are more or less true, and that the most dangerous feature is the entire unconsciousness of this on the part of teachers themselves, — their complete and smug

satisfaction with themselves and their limited field of knowledge.

If this is so true of college professors as to be generally noticed, how sadly and emphatically true it would be of our elementary school teachers if they were to be limited in their work to the instruction of youth in the simplest rudiments of some one subject. Who would not rather have teachers teaching children, with many interests and a wide outlook, even if their knowledge of this or that subject is limited, than men or women who know their subjects, at least so much of them as it is necessary to know in order to teach young children thoroughly, but who lack the wide outlook which general culture gives? This argument is a plea for culture as opposed to special knowledge for general educative purposes even in college, but infinitely more in elementary schools.

Another serious objection to departmental teaching is its interference with that correlation of school subjects which is not only proper but necessary in elementary education. Not only theory, but experience, shows that the teachers of special subjects are apt to be so impressed with the importance of their own subjects that they overlook the value of all-around development for the children. Each one pulls his own way and the strongest teacher gets the most work from the children, while they are likely to get an altogether one-sided and false view of the field of knowledge as it is presented to them.

Interferes with a Proper Correlation.

Take what view we may of the various schemes of correlation which have prevailed at different times in our school systems, all thoughtful teachers admit the importance of the recognition of the unity of life and the unity of knowledge in elementary teaching. The only reality is found in relation,

and this needs to be impressed upon children from the start. Especially such subjects as the language subjects need to be taught in connection with those which furnish the raw material. This becomes especially difficult under the departmental system. The teacher of language is likely to teach with sole regard to the formalities of speech, the rules of grammar, and that dead and deadening technique which has been fatal in our elementary schools. Instead of teaching language by its use for the expression of thought, stimulated by the other subjects of the curriculum, it is taught as a thing apart, with neither posterity nor offspring. The same objection applies to those other subjects which are naturally related in school as in life. Proper correlation in elementary schools is almost impossible under departmental teaching.

There is a further argument against departmental teaching which relates to the pupils solely. The unity and the saneness of school life are in danger of being destroyed by it. We must not forget Dr. John Dewey's often repeated dictum, "School is life," and it is much more important that its unity of interest, its unity of purpose, be kept before the children than that subjects be taught with extreme thoroughness. Each child in school needs to be personally conducted. Personal observation of the children while studying, careful consideration of their various lines of ability, the adaptation of the curriculum to the needs of each individual, are the most important duties of the teacher. Now if each child is moved about from one teacher to another, or is made the recipient of calls by teacher after teacher, this care is lost. No one looks after the child, — each one looks after his subject. Miss Jones values Johnny according to the show he makes in history, which is her subject. Miss Brown bases her

Students Need Personal Care.

estimate of Johnny and her treatment of him upon the brilliancy of his recitation in her subject, which is geography, and so on through the list of teachers and the list of subjects. There is no well-rounded scheme for his development. The whole plan places too much emphasis upon disconnected knowledge, and tends to substitute it for that growth of the spirit which is education, and for which during their earlier years children need not force-pumps of knowledge, but the careful nurture, the considerate and wise guidance, of a single, helpful teacher.

Need of Harmonious Treatment.

The departmental system in other ways tends to remove to too great an extent the personal element from the relation of the teacher and the pupil. It would be much wiser to place certain limitations on departmental work in the earlier high school years than to introduce the high school method of specialization and disintegration into the grammar schools. The years during which the pupil is in the higher grammar grades and first years of the high school are the most critical time in his life — the time of the beginning of adolescence; and he needs at that time, if any, the counsel and guidance of a firm, strong, wise friend, and not the pulling and tugging of a number of people anxious to get him through as many pages of their respective subjects as possible.

Departmental Work in High Schools Needs Limitation.

The complaint that children are overworked in the grammar grades often has force, considering the physical condition of the pupils at that time, but it gains more force if the work is departmental and the careful consideration of the class teacher is removed.

There is also the confusion which comes from bringing

pupils under the care of teachers having different standards. The good work of one teacher is often more than offset by the poor work of another, who happens to secure popularity because he makes his work easy.

School life, like all life, is a unity, and in order to be most effective with children the unity needs to be kept constantly before their minds. Education is much more than knowledge, and children need to be interested in their school life more, possibly, than in the acquisition of facts in the different subjects; for how small a part of life facts such as may be taught in school are, and how great a part of life the ideals and tendencies, the motives and aspirations, that may be planted in the upper grammar grades by the wise class teacher are!

Education More than Knowledge.

In view of the conflicting arguments for and against the departmental system of teaching, it may be well to consider whether a plan can be devised which shall retain the advantages of both the regular class-room organization and the departmental system without the disadvantages of either. Some attempts have been made which have met with reasonable success — enough to give hope that there is a way out. It must be borne in mind that any such compromise must respect certain principles.

Possible to Combine Both Methods of Organization.

First. A regular class-room teacher must have charge of the pupils of a room; must be familiar with all of their work, and must teach them in a sufficient number of correlated subjects to be able to follow their progress, to see whether they are studying wisely and well, and to guide and direct them in matters of both spiritual and physical hygiene during this important period of life. If such care cannot be

Regular Class-Room Teacher Must Have Charge of Pupils.

secured in harmony with any degree of departmental work, the departmental work should be abandoned.

Second. On the departmental side, any compromise arrangement should secure in certain important subjects continuity of instruction covering a period of more than one year. It should secure in at least one or two subjects the separate instruction of teachers who have given particular attention to those subjects. It should secure to each teacher opportunity to devote particular attention to at least one subject — enough to become expert in it, and at the same time should offer a sufficiently wide field of work covering other subjects to avoid the narrowing effect of extreme specialization.

Continuity of Instruction in Important Subjects.

Can this be accomplished? Under wise supervision it probably can, and ultimately, perhaps generally, some such plan as the following may be found feasible.

Let each teacher of a group, comprising classes of two or three consecutive years, select one subject, as broad as possible, in which he is particularly interested, and let him teach that in all the classes of this group, so that in each room perhaps two specialists give instruction in their subjects, the rest of the work being done by the class-room teacher. This naturally necessitates small groups; it may be, not more than three or four classes in a group, so that the teacher who chooses arithmetic, for instance, will instruct the pupils of perhaps three grades in this subject, and will be able to follow their consecutive development in his own line of work. This would occupy a portion of each day. The rest of his time could be given to the pupils of his own class. Another teacher may choose history

Each Class-Room Teacher to Teach One Subject in Two or Three Grades.

and teach that in like manner, in three or four grades or rooms.

It is possible to imagine an arrangement of small groups of this sort, if the teachers are harmonious and if the work is carefully supervised, which will secure to the pupils expert instruction in some subjects and will retain for them the careful guidance of the class-room teacher in all their work; and which will, at the same time, give each teacher an opportunity to study thoroughly some one subject and become a scholar in it and an expert in teaching it, and at the same time, by teaching the greater part of the subjects in the class-room, to keep a wider interest in knowledge generally and be able to correlate the different subjects.

Carefully conducted trials in some places have shown also that a plan somewhat similar to this can be, with profit, extended to the first year, at least, of the high school. One of the great problems of high school teachers is the fitting of new students into the new life in such a way as to avoid undue discouragement and that fatality which takes sometimes more than half of the entire class before the end of the first year. This fatality is largely due to the sudden plunge into extreme departmental work. Pupils during the earlier years of adolescence are particularly in need of sympathetic and helpful guidance. This they have had in the ordinary grammar school. When they enter the high school and are put into the hands of specialists at once, with no one to look after them in particular, in very many cases complete discouragement follows and the pupils either fail or voluntarily leave the high school.

Similar Plan Good for High School.

If a modified departmental system can be employed in the grammar school, as has been outlined, it will help to

bridge this chasm. Pupils will be accustomed to some degree of specialization, and to the influence of several minds at the same time. If the same modified departmental plan can be extended into the first year of the high school, with still further modifications, the bridge will be made yet stronger and the pupils will pass along easily and naturally from grammar school to high school without the dreadful shock which too frequently accompanies this transition.

Bridging Chasm between Grammar School and High School.

It is quite possible during the first year of the high school to have every student placed under the personal care of some teacher who shall teach him in more than one subject and shall be charged with the special duty of following him through his different lines of work and seeing where he needs help and guidance.

This has been tried carefully and for an extended period in certain high schools of the country, and with most pronounced good results. In one school the loss during the first year was cut down about fifty per cent after this change was inaugurated.

Gain in Permanent Attendance.

It is not the province of the public schools to apply such rigid methods of selection as to freeze out the weak or those of slow development. It is rather the province of all educational institutions to meet the needs of all children who come and to make the best of them. The survival of the fittest is a law of nature which it is the business of education, civilization, and Christianity to counterbalance. The office of schools is not chiefly to select the fit, but to make fit the unfit. Consequently, all schools should be so organized as to make it possible for some one to discover the aptitudes of pupils, to

Public School to Make Fit the Unfit.

care for them and to see that the best in each is developed. This should be done even if some expert knowledge is sacrificed.

It may be possible that by some such scheme as is here shown, beginning in the grammar grades and extending over the first year at least of the high school, an increase in definite scholarship on the part of teachers may be gained, and at the same time the individual pupils may be properly looked after — that is, that the advantages of the regular class-room system and of the departmental system may both be conserved and the disadvantages of both reduced to the lowest terms.

CHAPTER VII

Gradation and Promotion of Pupils

In every school system it is necessary to have some definite plan by which pupils may be properly classified and may be advanced from grade to grade according to their needs; it is necessary both on educational and on economic grounds. For economy's sake the pupils must be distributed so that each teacher shall have a suitable number — that is, so that the classes shall be kept reasonably full. On educational grounds the pupils must move along as rapidly as their growth demands, and must be associated with those of similar attainments.

Promotion by Examination.

Upon what principle, or principles, should the rules regulating the promotion of pupils depend? There has been, and still is, a very wide variance in regard to this matter in schools. There has been, moreover, a great change in general sentiment, and also in custom, within the past few years. The plan that came in with the systematizing of schools was promotion by examination alone. At stated times pupils were all submitted to a formal examination on questions prepared by some one in authority, and they stood or fell according to the results of these examinations.

In a public high school of considerable size that I once took charge of as principal I found this custom prevailing, and continued it until I learned better. The last week of

each school month was given up to review and written examination — that is, one fourth of all the time was so employed. As I remember, two or three days were spent in oral review and the remaining days in written examinations. These were rigid and mechanical in the extreme, and at the end of the year, or upon the completion of a subject, another examination was given and an average was struck, which determined absolutely and without any other consideration whether the pupils were to be promoted or not. I have no doubt that the principal who inaugurated this plan in this particular school, and who is now one of the most distinguished educational men in the country, has often laughed at his precision. But customs scarcely less harmful prevail now in spots.

The examination fetich still has its worshipers, but in so far as I know, there are now comparatively few school systems in which reliance is placed wholly upon examination in determining the promotion of pupils.

THE RATIONALIA OF EXAMINATIONS

Notwithstanding the general loss of respect for examinations as determining promotion, it would be difficult to conduct a scheme of education, whether for an individual or for a million individuals gathered into a system, which did not provide for examinations.

An examination is a partial test of both knowledge and power. No examination can fully test either knowledge or power. As to the former, at most it can determine whether certain specific facts have been acquired. It cannot determine how much is known or how much is not known, so it is necessarily limited to the strictly conventional or to the specific things that are known to have

Examination Partial Test.

been taught; and yet in those elementary phases of knowledge which are represented in all educational institutions there are certain fundamental and characteristic data which all should know who assume to have any knowledge of the subjects whatever, and a knowledge of these can, to a limited degree, be tested by an examination. But it must be borne in mind in all examinations that the examination shows only whether the specific questions asked have been correctly answered, and not whether other questions equally important might or might not have been answered.

As to power, an examination may determine the ability of the student to do certain specific and technical things. The field of activity is necessarily of the most limited sort, and very little can be ascertained as to the ability of the student to do those things that it is most important in life he should be able to do, and so we have the long line of great men whose college records, as determined by examinations, were most unsatisfactory, partly, perhaps, because the tests applied did not determine their real knowledge or power.

And yet all schools must have examinations. Their chief value, however, is to the student and not to the teacher.

Chief Value of Examination to the Pupil Himself.

They do not to any very great degree indicate to the broad-minded and wise teacher any facts about the students which he has not already in his possession, but they often do open the eyes of the student to his own state to an extraordinary degree. It is good for us to be put up against ourselves and find out through bitter experience how much or how little we know and can do. So, frequent examinations of various sorts should be given: examinations in which the questions asked cover a wide range; easy examinations to

see how much the student can tell about his specific subject broadly stated; narrow and technical examinations to see how little he knows about certain phases of subjects; examinations moreover so difficult that only the best can pass them. But the promotion of no child should be based upon these examinations; they should be used solely for metaphysical and educational ends. Their only use in determining the right of the student to promotion should be their indirect effect upon the minds of those who must decide the question of promotion; they are among the lights shed upon the case, not by any means always the most valuable.

DAILY MARKING

Another very common method of determining the question of promotion is that of the daily marking of the recitation. This is sometimes used independently and sometimes in connection with the examination. Of the two it is by far the more deadly. Much better an examination coming at times with carefully prepared questions than the fatal pencil suspended over the equally fatal note-book while the student is trying to say something that shall secure a good mark. With the daily marking system it is practically impossible for teachers to teach well or for students to recite well, because these both imply freedom, and neither teacher nor pupil can be free under this system. If the student is to be marked upon his answers to questions, of course the questions must be strictly categorical and capable of being answered correctly by him. The teacher may not stimulate thought and appeal to the imagination by asking questions outside the narrow field of the text-book, because if he does the student will be unable

Daily Marking Destroys the Recitation.

to answer them and must receive, consequently, a bad mark, and the students themselves will hold the teachers most rigidly to the categorical question under these conditions. Nor can the student indulge in any flights of imagination or investigation or ask questions betraying curiosity or ignorance. He must know his questions and answers in order to get his marks. By combining the two, the daily marking of the recitation with the formal examination at regular intervals, you have a combination of the two worst conceivable methods, — two negatives that make a positive evil.

THE PROPER TEST

To Place Students Where They Can Do Best.

What, then, is the best test? First, let us answer another question. What is the motive of promotion? It has but one, — to place the students in the class where they can do the work that it is best for them to do. There should be no element of punishment or reward in the promotion of students, — absolutely nothing but a common-sense assignment to the best place for work. Teachers are sometimes influenced in their judgment and their markings by the conventional or unconventional conduct of the pupil, by personal behavior or personal characteristics, and they have been known to refuse to promote pupils because "they did not deserve it," that is, because they had been offensive or disagreeable or disorderly, or had not studied as hard as the teacher thought they should have studied. Such considerations have nothing to do with the case and cannot be introduced without injury. "Is John or Susan better fitted to do the work of grade one or of grade two?" is the only question. The time of a child's education in school is

limited, and to keep him back a half year or a year for any reason other than his own personal good is to commit a serious offense against him. To push him ahead, on the other hand, into places where he becomes lost and discouraged and is unable to do his best work, is equally an offense.

Now, to return to the original question, "What is the proper test for promotion?" There is only one answer, — the fitness of the pupil for promotion is a matter of judgment to be determined by those who are in a position to know, using all the data available. A teacher, after associating with a child for a term of a half-year or a year, listening to his recitations and daily inspecting his work in the various subjects, should know whether that child is qualified to go ahead and do the work of the grade beyond or not. The teacher's judgment should be strengthened by all kinds of natural and artificial memory, — by records of the various things that have been done by the student during the term, which indicate the possession of sufficient knowledge or power to do the work of the grade beyond, or the contrary. But there are many other considerations than those involved in these various records, — questions of temperament, of industry, of home environment, of health, of age, of maturity of thought. These questions and many more should be considered in determining the fitness of the student for any particular grade. Some students will do better under a spur such as is given by work a little beyond them, while others will be discouraged by such stimulation and will do better when the work appears light.

A Matter of Individual Judgment.

Value of Records.

Other Elements.

All that is needed in determining whether students shall

be promoted or not is the application of common-sense judgment. Formal and mechanical tests are dangerous. **Individual Needs to be Considered.** The various means employed for educational ends, such as oral and written tests or examinations and reviews, should all be employed as shedding light upon the situation, but the final question should be a matter of judgment, as the mind of the teacher has been affected by all these various influences. It should not be even a matter of averages. Numerals, whether taken singly or in averages, are dangerous as applied to the needs and the laws of growth of the human mind.

One thing should be borne in mind always, and it needs constant reiteration, — no consideration for the system as such should enter into the question of the promotion of pupils. The system has its claims; but promotion is an individual matter, and a single child whose case is under consideration is entitled to a judgment according to his needs, not according to the needs of his neighbors or of the system as a whole. The system that cannot stand the shock of proper consideration for individuals is an unworthy system. It should make no difference whether the student is ready for promotion at the middle of the term or the beginning of the term; he should be promoted whenever he is ready. It also should make no difference whether he is the only one in the class to be promoted or the only one not to be promoted; his individual good should be the only consideration in each case, and every other consideration which interferes with this should be sacrificed to it, even if some classes are unduly large and others unduly small. In such cases the remedy can easily be found in a new division of classes.

It is better to have regular promotions frequently than to have them infrequently. Through all grades the regular

class promotions should occur not less frequently than semi-annually, and in the primary grades they should occur more often, as three or four times a year. From this it is fair to infer that the regular class promotions are perfectly proper and should be maintained. While every individual should receive all the consideration he needs, the exceptional individual is the one who most urgently demands special treatment. Probably three fourths of the children in every class will move along with sufficient uniformity to justify class promotions at regular intervals; possibly ninety per cent in many classes. It is the remaining tenth that is in danger of being submerged and lost.

Regular, Frequent Promotions Desirable.

PROMOTION DEVICES

This subject has been much agitated of late years, and most thinkers upon educational subjects, including the leading superintendents, are opposed to the rigid classification of pupils, although unfortunately this is found in practice often where it has been discouraged in theory. As a result of the agitation of the subject many people have come forward with nostrums for remedying the evil, some of which have been widely heralded. Some of these are simply mechanical devices for doing away with the admitted evil. Others are based upon an eccentric philosophy of education and are radical and fundamental attempts to substitute extreme individualism for the social school, while still others provide machinery for affording to individual children new crutches in the form of advisory teachers, so that the weak may limp along faster and keep up with the more active. Most of these nostrums are composed of simples, some good and some

Danger of Nostrums.

bad, — that is, practically no one of the patent methods for removing the evils of rigid classification is without merit, but, so far as I have been able to examine them, they are all defective in that they are superficial, based upon a partial view of the educational field and exaggerating certain features.

One very much advertised method makes so much of mechanical provisions for promoting individual students that it quite ignores the weightier educational questions involved and tends to inferior teaching, because the question of promotion is made the great question rather than a corollary. Another method, also much heralded some years since, though now not so frequently heard of, is attractive in many ways, but based upon a dangerous philosophy, viz.: that the individual is to be educated without regard to his neighbors, thus ignoring the most important feature of education. Any system which attempts to do away with class recitation and to substitute individual work is a return, practically, to the unfortunate private tutor notion, and disregards the very valuable training which comes from co-operation and competition in the class.

In regard to the third mentioned, — the furnishing of external individual help for students, — there is extreme danger that the help so provided will lessen rather than increase the independent power of children; that self-reliance will be impaired, and while apparently rapid progress may be made through certain elementary grades, it is too much like the "stuffing" for examination, of which all disapprove. Hence it seems necessary to examine all special methods carefully before employing them. Nothing can take the place of education itself, which is growth.

Many nostrums have been advocated for the training

of this or that mental power, and for the securing of some really admirable educational end, but each has ultimately either taken its place as one of the many departments of the general educational scheme, or has fallen into innocuous desuetude. So we come back to the conclusion that the only thing needed in determining the promotion of pupils in all grades is common-sense judgment, of course resting upon a rigid spinal column, and the sooner we can sweep away all diverting accessories, the sooner will the children receive their due.

Notwithstanding all this, it is not safe to leave the promotion of children in a school system to chance. A plan must be carefully formulated by the superintendent and promulgated so that there may be uniformity of thought and method, though not uniformity of promotion. I beg to offer here a scheme which has worked well in some places, which might not work well in others, but which may at least be suggestive to the studious.

A RATIONAL SCHEME

In all grades, beginning with the fourth, at the end of each week teachers prepare, on blanks furnished for the purpose, an estimate of the work of each student during the week. These estimates represent the judgment of the teachers upon the ability and industry displayed by the pupils in the various subjects pursued. They are recorded by the use of the letters A and B, A being the passing mark, B indicating failure.

At frequent intervals, brief examinations or written reviews of various sorts are given the pupils in their respective classes, and a record of the results obtained in each case is kept by the teachers. Questions for at least one examina-

tion in each semester are furnished or specially authorized by the superintendent of schools. The results of these examinations are not made the basis for promotion, but are used and considered by the teacher as a guide and critique for his own work, and as one means for determining the character of the work of the students.

At the end of each month a report is sent to the parent or guardian of every pupil, giving the results of the weekly estimates taken from the teacher's record, modified by the results of any written tests given during the month. Each of these reports, signed by the parent or guardian, is returned to the teacher.

At the end of each semester, the teacher and principal together examine the record of each pupil, including both weekly estimates and all tests or examinations given during the term, taking into consideration also all circumstances, so far as known, affecting the work of the pupil.

All pupils whose work has been found upon the whole satisfactory, and all who have given evidence that they are qualified to do the work of the succeeding grade, are promoted. Those whose work has been found to be in the main unsatisfactory, and who have not given satisfactory evidence of ability to do the work of the succeeding grade, are not promoted, provided that in the case of exceptional pupils conditional promotions for a definite time may be made.

This is a résumé of rules already in force. It will be observed that there are regular but not daily markings by teachers, and these markings are not technical nor in figures; they are simply occasional records of the general character of the work done by the pupils to serve as aids to the memory. A record is also kept of all tests and written reviews, these, too, as aids to the memory. No one of them, nor all of them

together, can be used technically and formally to determine promotion; they are all kept simply as aids to memory. Nor are they averaged. The average is a most dangerous device in this connection. Sometimes a poor record during the first part of the year may bring the average down to a point below passing, although good work done the latter part of the year may indicate a state of mind entirely fit for promotion; and the reverse may be true. The only object of the records is to prevent snap judgments upon the most recent effort of the student, be it good or bad.

The number of marks used is also important. My own judgment is that there should be but two marks used, — one to indicate work of sufficiently good char- **Two Marks** acter to make it clear that the student ought to **Enough.** go ahead, and the other to indicate the opposite. Fine gradations are most difficult to make; they are a trial to the teacher, who never can make them accurately, and they are dangerous for the students. It is not necessary for the students to be ranked in comparison with one another. They will draw their own conclusions surely enough, and they need no artificial help to priggishness or to discouragement or bravado.

There is a further danger in the use of marks to indicate exceptional merit or exceptional demerit. Students come to rely upon marks and to work for marks. **Working** Teachers sometimes fear that if special excellence **for Marks.** is not recognized students will not work as well, which is of itself a confession that their studying is from a wrong motive. Suppose students do work a little harder to get a mark, that work does not have upon them the right effect; it does not make them better students; it does not cultivate the habit of study; it does not even cultivate a love for study. On the

contrary, it acts to divert the mind from these very desirable ends. The child comes to think of this good mark rather than of the work itself. I would rather have good, average work based upon interest, than what the teacher might mark as superior work, resting back upon the desire for a mark. The former I would expect to see followed by good, average work later. The latter is very likely to be followed by a complete drop when the stimulus is removed.

Moreover, as has already been said, the reliance upon marks is most dangerous morally; it tends to take the mind from the real ends of life and turn it to inferior ends. It is impossible for us to conceive to how large an extent the prevailing low standards of life, the love for money and secondary ends, are due to the sort of standards that have prevailed in our schools, and the stimuli presented to our young people while getting their education. How can we expect the boy or girl who has been urged all through his school days to work for a mark, or a prize, or to avoid a punishment — that is, for some secondary end — when he comes out into life to grasp immediately the values of life and work for primary ends? Is it not the most natural thing that he should work for money, place, or something else which is secondary? The habit is formed in school and it simply accents the worst in our American life, and no amount of preaching afterward can prevail to break this habit. It seems to me that this reason alone is sufficient to deter us from offering secondary inducements to young people who are going through school.

Moral Danger of Secondary Ends.

From the above it must be evident that in my judgment the fuss made over the promotion of students is entirely unwarranted by facts; that there is no need of great agitation

or upheaval, but simply of the application of the same sort of common sense that is applied to any successful business enterprise; and further, that we need to get all of our school work away from the degrading influence of that excessive competition with which our whole social and business life is infected.

CHAPTER VIII

The Place of the Teacher

We have discussed in the previous chapters the administration of the internal affairs of the school, the employments in which the children are engaged and the conduct of the pupils, what it should be, its underlying principles and the methods of securing it, all together constituting school life. The teacher has been taken for granted. It is now time to discuss the teacher specifically, to determine just what is his place in the scheme of school organization and administration and how he should conduct himself toward the system as a whole, and in particular toward his own class of pupils.

THE TEACHER MAKES THE SCHOOL

School a Society.

A school is a society. Its factors are the children and the teacher. Both are essential, but it is the latter that gives the society its peculiar, differentiating quality. The one characteristic which distinguishes the school from other collections of people is the presence of the teacher. In more senses than the popular one it is the teacher who makes the school.

The Teacher Differentiates the School.

The world is full of people who are educating themselves consciously or unconsciously, who are utilizing all the great agents and forces of life as means of spiritual growth, but only in a figurative sense is the world itself a school. The figure consists in the personification of these various agents and forces, and even of life itself, and the treatment of them as

teachers. There is no school without a living teacher entering, to some degree, into the lives of the pupils, forming some sort of spiritual union with them. It is as true in the practical sense as in the philosophical that the teacher is the school.

SMOOTHING THE TEACHER'S PATH

Every school administrator knows that his one serious business is to secure good teachers. Courses of study are important and a good school is more easily secured with a good course of study than with a poor one. Proper organization is important; good schoolhouses are important; good textbooks are important and all the appliances which may be used to further education; but none of these alone nor all of them together constitute a school or can make a good school, and the good teacher can make a good school if any or all of these concomitants and aids are lacking. Hence it follows, since good teachers are not limited to any one locality, or produced at any one institution or by any one method of training alone, and good schools are found in all places, even under most unfavorable circumstances and coming from the least promising sources, that it becomes the chief duty of the executive authorities of school systems everywhere, first to secure the best possible teachers, and then to remove, in so far as possible, all obstructions from their paths, to give them free scope and to aid them in their work in every conceivable way. All the machinery of great school systems, local, state, and national, has for its aim, properly, this one thing, to make it easier for the teacher to teach well.

The School System to Make It Easier to Teach.

SCOPE OF THE TEACHER'S INDIVIDUALITY

In the Rural School the Teacher All in All.

In the small private school, in the rural school, and in most of the schools found in the earlier history of education in this country, the teacher was all in all; the teacher made the school; he was expected to make the school. If the school was good, it was to his credit; if bad, it was his fault. The best type of school depending wholly upon the teacher is the rural school. Here the interference with his work is very slight indeed; he is compelled to employ his own initiative, make his own plans, organize his institution, and execute his plans. Young teachers, coming from training institutions, are frequently urged to teach in rural schools for a while, in order to develop the power of initiative, of independent action, through their necessary exercise in the professional solitude of the country schoolhouse, — and it is good advice.

Systems Subordinate the Individual.

Many of the strongest and best teachers and educational leaders that the country has ever known have received their first impulse, their versatility and breadth of view, and the ability to meet new difficulties, which have made them great, in the small, unpainted schoolhouse in the remote country district where they began their discouraging work. Here they were required to study their pupils and give them work suitable for them, to devise their own methods, to meet emergencies, often serious, quickly and firmly. In the country school that is good for anything, the teacher is "it." Alas, that in any system of schools he should ever cease to be "it." But there is, unfortunately, in the development of large institutions, a tendency to subordinate the individual, and

to destroy individuality. This is noticeably true in great school systems. It seems almost inevitable. The demands of the organization itself are so great, it requires so much executive power to keep the machine running, that the machine itself attracts undue attention, and we are in danger of forgetting that the business of the school is to teach individual children, and not simply to move without friction as part of a machine. This worship of machines is the most debasing kind of fetich worship. It destroys the power to judge of values and, like all worship of inferior gods, it subordinates the higher ends to the lower.

TYRANNY OF MACHINES

Teachers Judged by Their Ability to Run with the Machine.

Too often in our great city systems, teachers are judged by their ability to run along smoothly in a well-oiled machine rather than by their power of inspiration, their ability to uplift, encourage, strengthen, and really teach children. I have known teachers full of the love of youth, possessed of extraordinary inspirational power and ability to make children think, work, and learn, driven from the school system because they did not readily untie red tape. We too often forget that the school system is useful only so far as it makes it easier for the teacher to teach, that every unnecessary burden, every extraneous demand upon the teacher's energies, everything which distracts his mind or takes his thought away from the one purpose of his work, which is teaching the children, is a positive injury.

One of the worst forms of machine domination is that which places undue stress upon statistics and makes of the teacher a compiler of figures. Great marking schemes have been devised which prevent teachers from teaching with their

whole souls; schemes for marking children upon all conceivable points, which require brain-racking study, burning of the midnight oil and, it must be confessed, even imagination, to an awful extent.

The effect of this sort of thing upon the children has already been discussed (Chapter VII). The effect upon the teacher is almost as bad as upon the children. As such systems lead children to study for marks, to behave for marks, to cheat and lie for marks, as well as to be envious and hateful and narrowly exacting, so they lead teachers to teach for marks, to control for marks, to put the whole stress of their work upon the getting of marks, and even, too, sometimes to cheat for marks and to lie for marks.

Dangers of Marking Systems.

IMMORAL ORGANIZATION

The evil of all this thing is easy to see. Any method of organization or of work that distracts the attention from the real end, and forces it upon a secondary end, is immoral. As has been said repeatedly in this book, the great evils in life result from placing undue stress upon secondary ends; upon the accumulation of wealth instead of the proper expenditure of wealth; upon acquiring power instead of upon the proper use of power; upon getting rather than giving.

Evil of Placing Stress upon Secondary Ends.

To force teachers continually to drill along narrow lines in order that marks may be secured is to take away their spiritual freedom and to degrade them. The teacher who is forever harassed lest her pupils shall not pass, naturally is unable to give her whole attention to the needs of the children and to the satisfying of those needs.

The teacher of the rural school, if of the right sort, studies John and William and Susan, and decides that for John's good he should do this; William, for his good, should do that; and Susan, for her good, should do something else; but the machine-made, machine-driven teacher, in a system having no such freedom of action, treats John and William and Susan all alike — they must all take the same brimstone and treacle because it is good for somebody — and is not allowed to exercise his own judgment or follow his interest in their spiritual well-being. This is not only bad for the children but, if possible, worse for the teacher. They may recover, because their school days fortunately end some time; the teacher's fate becomes fixed, as his school days never end.

Children All Treated Alike.

THE MARKING OF TEACHERS

Another evil which is finding its way into our larger cities is the arbitrary and excessive marking of the teachers themselves. The supervising force at times seems to regard it as its chief function, not to instruct, inspire, and help the teachers, but to mark them. I have known supervisors to go about from schoolroom to schoolroom, note-book and pencil in hand, sitting for a while in each room like malignant sphinxes, eyeing the frightened teacher, who in her terror does everything wrong, and then marking her in a doomsday book. (Such supervisors' paths, like those of reckless automobilists, are strewn with the dead bodies of hopes, and ambitions, and nerves.) The excuse given is that some teachers will do wrong and hence a system of espionage and terrorism is extended, like the clouds of heaven, over all alike. This, of course, instead

Terrorizing the Teacher.

of correcting the evil, increases it and creates new ones undreamed of before.

Impairing the Teacher's Self-Respect.

Any system of supervision which tends to impair the self-respect of the teacher, to weaken his sense of responsibility to his own conscience, to belittle his office, and especially to humble him in the eyes of his pupils, is vicious in the extreme. Better no system than such a system, and this is a danger to be guarded against in all great systems.

NEED AND DANGERS OF ORGANIZATION

Organization Necessary.

The origin of these evils is easy to find. As population becomes congested and schools multiply, ordinary economy requires unification, condensation, and division of labor. Schools must be grouped and graded, that is, children who are approximately equal in power and in attainments must be put together and placed in the charge of teachers who are adapted to their conditions. It becomes impossible for a single teacher to carry a single child through a long course of instruction. Schools must be so organized that the child can pass from teacher to teacher without undue loss or friction.

The course of school education should be continuous and without shocks, hence, as systems grow, increasingly closer organization is necessary; over each group of teachers must be placed a head to see that the organization is maintained, that each one does his part, that the children move along from class to class as their growth requires without setbacks or loss. As communities become still larger there must be many of these groups of schools with their teachers and children. These must be organized so that the children may pass from one to another without loss, and there must

be heads over these larger groups. So a complete organization grows up in the course of time, planned superficially somewhat after the manner of an army with a principal officer and the necessary subordinate officers of various grades. These officers, endowed with large power, easily come to consider it their chief vocation to keep the machine running, until in time the machine itself is so magnified in their sight as to appear of chief consequence. So the education of the child, for which the machine was created, is too frequently subordinated to the running of the machine itself; that is, we too frequently forget that the school officers and the school machine itself exist but for one purpose, to help the teachers teach, and that when they cease to do that they have ceased to have a right to exist.

IMPORTANCE OF THE TEACHER

The most precious possession of a school system, rightly viewed, is the teacher's devotion to his work. Any plan of organization, any method of administration or supervision which lessens that, and diverts the teacher's energy into any foreign channel, is an evil. In the office of every superintendent and in the note-book of every supervisor should be written, *the teacher is the school*, and the daily inquiry of every such officer should be, "How can I stimulate in all the teachers under my supervision love for their work, self-respect, a feeling of independence, and an ambition to do better teaching than ever before or than anybody else has done?"

CHAPTER IX

The Freedom of the Teacher

The school system is but an assemblage of schools, that is, of classes of children with their teachers so organized as to raise to the maximum the efficiency of each teacher; that at least is the theory.

The great essential to real efficiency is freedom. I do not mean by freedom license or even liberty to do as one pleases, but the ability and the possibility to direct one's energies with intelligence and purpose to the highest results.

Such freedom is primarily internal rather than external, and for the teacher it begins far back of the organization, far back even of the act of teaching. The first steps in freedom must be taken by the individual. The teacher must be free from ignorance, from prejudice, from undue pride, from the debasing pressure of false ambition, from unwillingness to learn or to be guided; that is, the teacher must have a free soul in the Pauline sense. That is primary. Now suppose such a teacher has been elected to a position in a school system; this internal freedom must be preserved, and added to it must be a certain amount of external freedom, freedom to exercise native and acquired powers without undue restraint or perversion.

Freedom Primarily Internal.

THE FREEDOM OF CO-OPERATION

There is a higher freedom than that of the individual in solitude. It is the freedom which comes from association

and co-operation. An individual who has become an intelligent and conscious member of society, contributing of his best freely to the common good, is free to draw upon the community for a vast increment of power. The individual who has become a co-ordinate member of a free community is enormously magnified, is a vastly larger being than the same individual in solitude. The society becomes his larger self through which he can do greater things than when alone; by its protection and help he has become free from innumerable trammels and hindrances with which alone he was unable to cope. A true society is a great instrument of freedom through which each one is able to render far greater service than when alone; but when society arbitrarily checks the exercise of individual power, unduly restrains individual initiative, seeks to turn all the energies of each member into a single channel made by a single directing mind, then there comes a distinct loss of freedom and the individual dwindles.

Society Offers Higher Freedom.

POSSIBILITIES OF URBAN SCHOOLS

It ought to be possible in a school system for each teacher to do much better work than a rural school-teacher can do, because while contributing his part to the general stock of knowledge and skill and inspiration, he can draw without limit upon that accumulated stock himself. Each teacher can learn from the other teachers, for wisdom is communicable. If the heads of the system are wise and possessed of inspirational force, the teacher can add to his power from their wisdom and inspiration. The system properly conducted substitutes co-operation and common interests for isolation and

The Urban Teacher should be Better.

individual interests. The urban teacher should be a very much larger and wiser and better teacher than the rural teacher. In some instances this is the case. Our greatest teachers are not country school-teachers but city school-teachers, because it is possible in an urban system to become greater; there are more aids, more stimuli, more nutriment available. But the teacher may avail himself of these only when the method and plan of organization and supervision make it possible; when the school board and school superintendent and supervisors consider it their part primarily to contribute the largest share of inspiration and wisdom to the common stock, and secondarily to act as distributors of this common stock to the teaching forces.

Supervising Officers the Largest Contributors.

Let us briefly recapitulate the doctrine of the freedom of the teacher here advocated, lest any infer from what has been said a destructive radicalism subversive of order and proper administration.

True freedom has its seat within the individual and consists in a proper adjustment of personal tastes, abilities, and aspirations to conditions and obligations, and particularly to social conditions. No one is truly free who is wholly selfish; who is ignorant; who is prejudiced; who is self-sufficient or inconsiderate of the views, the needs, the knowledge of others.

Anarchy is not a phase of freedom; it is its antipode. In many respects submission to absolute authority is nearer freedom than either complete isolation or anarchy. Life in society necessitates the consideration of all for each and each for all. The general good becomes paramount and must be so recognized. Indeed each individual attains his freedom only when he thus recognizes the superior claim of the social whole.

The difference between a benevolent tyranny and freedom is not in the end, which in both cases is the common good, but in the fact that in the one case submission to the general weal is forced upon the individual; in the other it is voluntarily and with purpose yielded. In order to make the devotion of each individual to the general good effective, there must be co-ordination, centralization of authority, and organization. Without these there is enormous waste. The individuals, however well meaning, get in one another's way; some needs are over-supplied; others are neglected. Thus in an ideal social state — granted even individual perfection — government, central power, recognized by all the individuals and controlling to a degree their conduct, is necessary; how much more in a very imperfect social state, with individuals of all shades and degrees of fitness for society.

The secret and the value of democracy are found, not in the absence of law or government, but rather in the utilization for common ends of all the powers of the different individuals freely contributed, which results in the education, that is, in the growth of the individuals.

Benevolent autocracy with even an absolutely perfect ruler would fail to develop the highest character in its subjects because it would fail to share responsibility.

The Progress of Society Due to Individual Improvement.

The evolution of society is the result of individual efforts, under stress of circumstances, to ameliorate conditions. The chief value of such efforts is the growth in power and freedom of those who make them; that is, advancement in civilization is largely due to the development of those who assume responsibility for the general good, often with little, and sometimes with no visible, present effect. Not

immediate external result, but education, is the product of moral and social struggle, and this education is the one sufficient reward for such struggle.

Apply all this to the school. It is certainly necessary to have school officers with power, and with responsibilities consistent with such power. A school superintendent must have authority, and must have responsibility for the work done under him. The same is true of the school principal, but it is also true of the teacher. Unquestionably, unsatisfactory results would be produced if in a city school system there were no central power, and every individual were free to carry out his own law or his own whim. The result of such a condition would be somewhat akin to anarchy. At least there would be enormous waste, and countless children would suffer from crude and ill-digested experimentation.

Officials Must Exercise Power Wisely.

Much power should be bestowed upon the school superintendent and his subordinate officers, such as supervisors and principals, who should be held responsible for results, and there can be no responsibility without authority. It would be a mistake to organize school systems in such a way as to lessen the power of the superintendent and of the other officials. The great need is not an overturning of government, but the proper exercise of authority by those possessing it. A superintendent without authority would be weak indeed. A superintendent who thinks that knowledge will die with him, or who is afraid that his authority will be lessened if some one else shares responsibility with him, is a foolish superintendent.

The fundamental principle of democracy, that of education through responsibility, is essential for successful administration in schools.

The sum of all the knowledge and all the power of all the teaching force is certainly greater than that of the ablest superintendent, and the wise superintendent will so organize his forces as to utilize this cumulative power and this combined wisdom. He will endeavor to stimulate in his teachers that true freedom which is within, and he will bestow the other freedom, which is also necessary, freedom for each teacher to do his best. Of necessity there will be negation. Some things will necessarily be forbidden, but, as in dealing with children, there will be only so much negation as is requisite for success, and there will be every encouragement to free activity. Teachers will be stimulated to study, to visit, to see new things, to devise new plans, and to put them into execution; first, for the sake of testing them, and afterwards, if they are proven worthy, as permanent features of their work. Teachers will be held responsible for results more than for methods, though methods that have already been proven vicious or dangerous will, of course, be forbidden. The teacher of to-day who should advocate the method of Dr. Rainsford's teacher in Ireland fifty years ago, namely, kicking the pupil on the shins for every mistake, would certainly need some negation, as abundant experience has proven such a method not desirable; and when teachers persistently refuse to follow the dictates of sound judgment, are recalcitrant to authority or inefficient, naturally they should cease to be teachers. Any system of administration which makes it impossible or especially difficult to remove poor teachers, which destroys or lessens that power which all society finds necessary for its perpetuity and well-being, is dangerous and, if carried to extremes, would be absolutely subversive of good schools.

It should not be Difficult to Remove Poor Teachers.

Yet the fact remains that the great business of the administrative officers of a school system is to develop strong teachers, and a proper freedom. The large freedom of society, which develops each individual to the utmost and utilizes each for all and all for each, is as essential to the good teacher as to the good citizen.

There is one form of bondage, unfortunately not unknown among teachers and school officers, against which a word of caution may not be amiss. I refer to the incurring of obligations toward powers either political or commercial in return for which some compensation is sure to be expected.

The worst form of political bondage comes through actual bribery, the payment in money or a more valuable medium for an appointment. Recent developments have shown that such bribery is not uncommon in some sections of the country, members of city school boards and rural school directors both stooping to take money from the teachers for their appointments.

This does not need discussion. The mere mention of it is sufficiently painful.

But there are certain other entangling alliances much more subtle in their nature, but frequently even more disastrous in their results. Often they are at first entered into innocently enough. I refer to the seeking and accepting of valuable favors, not only from politicians, but also from corporations doing business with schools.

Teachers do well to remember that there is no philanthropy behind the rendering of such aid. A return favor is always expected.

We have unfortunately every now and then the pitiful spectacle of teachers, school superintendents, and even university presidents, controlled by commercial corporations,

whose motive is to gain prestige and influence and ultimately to sell their wares. It is not uncommon to hear the representatives of such concerns openly boast of their control of this or that "prominent educator."

As I have said, these alliances have usually begun through the acceptance of aid innocently enough. But a teacher once in the toils finds it almost impossible ever to recover freedom without the sacrifice of position or reputation.

Teachers who desire freedom should be extremely cautious in accepting favors from those who may want compensation at some time. There is no slavery worse than that of political or corrupt commercial domination. It is useless to plead for the freedom of the teachers until they free themselves from such forms of bondage.

CHAPTER X

The Development of the Teacher

As has been said, the sole function of a school system is to secure better teaching through improving the individual teachers and making it not only possible but easier for them to do their best work. The system which does not accomplish these ends, however carefully organized and skilfully managed it may be, fails to justify its existence, and a system which in even a slight degree impairs the quality of the teaching done is a nuisance and a menace.

FREEDOM — HOW CONSERVED

System should not Interfere with the Work of the Teacher.

How may the school system reinforce the teacher and conserve his freedom? Possibly I should first answer the negative question: How may a system be so conducted as not to interfere with the work of the teacher?

My answer to the question is: First, by reducing the machinery to the mimimum consistent with a reasonable degree of unity, eliminating all unnecessary red-tape and all demands upon the teacher, in addition to his work of teaching, that it is possible to get along without.

Unnecessary Detail Eliminated.

A certain amount of detail is, of course, necessary; records must be kept and some statistics must be gathered, for statistics do not always lie and sometimes are useful. Information regarding the attendance of children and conditions prevailing in and about the schools,

which throws light upon the educational problem, is important and must be secured through the teachers if at all. But there are many kinds of information secured through the compiling of figures which are of no value to any one, or at least not of sufficient value to justify the sacrifice of time and effort required to secure them.

The passion for statistics which dominates some school superintendents is a dangerous one and easily runs into statistical dissipation. Many of the elaborate systems of keeping records of individual pupils are not only needless, but are a positive injury to both pupils and teachers. (See Chapters VII and VIII.)

My second answer to the negative question is: Avoid every device or method of organization which tends to lessen the teacher's individuality and sense of personal responsibility to the children.

First Duty to Meet the Needs of Children.

The teacher in the schoolroom should always feel that his first duty is to ascertain and meet the needs of the individual children under his care. In the machine system the tendency is to center the thought of the teacher not upon the children, but upon the higher authorities, so that, instead of feeling responsible to them and being anxious to serve them, he becomes over-anxious to "stand in with" the administration and sacrifices his own obligation to the higher law, to the demands of his superior officers for uniformity. This shifting of conscience is not only encouraged, but is almost necessitated by some prevalent systems of administration. In particular does the excessive marking of teachers according to arbitrary standards, referred to in Chapter VIII, encourage this transfer of allegiance.

When a teacher is made to feel that he is in school not

to serve the children, but to serve some one else, — the school superintendent, the school board, or the local politician, — he ceases then and there to be as good a teacher as he might be. This does not mean that a teacher must not obey the school board and the school superintendent. The teacher must obey, but if by any action of the authorities undue stress is laid upon the teacher's relations to them, belittling the importance of his relations to the pupils, evil surely follows.

Teachers Must Obey.

The task of correcting this evil rests, of necessity, with the authorities. It is true that a very good teacher, even under a martinet superintendent and a mechanical system, can do much toward bringing about right relations with his pupils and toward keeping the machine in its proper subordinate place. But the average teacher cannot do this and simply falls in with the manifest requirements of the system. If the stress is placed upon the machine side of the work, — the relations of the teacher to the officials, — and if the children are not kept prominently to the fore by the powers that be, the teachers will very soon transfer all their allegiance to these same powers.

It is for the school superintendent primarily to keep constantly before the teachers the relative importance of their relations with the children on the one side, and the school authorities on the other. He must continually impress upon his subordinates the fact that all the school machinery, superintendents and teachers included, exists solely for the children and is profitable only in so far as it serves the children. Hence, the first duty of the school administration is to see to it that demands upon the time and energy of the teacher which lessen the amount of good work that he can do for the

The Authorities Must Reduce Demands.

children, and all methods of treatment which lower his self-respect, weaken his individuality, and transfer his allegiance from the children to the machine, are removed.

System to Help the Teacher.

But there is a positive side to this question. A school system, properly organized and conducted, can directly and positively help the teaching and aid in conserving the teacher's freedom.

Make Teachers Feel that They are of Consequence.

How can the system make a poor corps of teachers good or a good corps better, keep the teachers up to the highest standards possible, and secure from them their very best work? First, by making them feel that they are persons of consequence whose judgments are worth considering and who may justly be supposed to possess reasonably tender consciences, some professional ambition, and at least a fair degree of devotion to their work. The first duty of school superintendents and other officials is to lead the teachers to respect themselves, to feel that they are trusted, and in return to secure their confidence. This done, it is possible to put into effect definite plans for helping the teachers and developing their freedom.

The plans most commonly and most effectively employed for this end fall into four general classes: The course of study, meetings with teachers, class-room visitation, and private conferences. These we will consider in the following chapters.

CHAPTER XI

The Course of Study

The course of study offers the most definite and the most effective means of helping teachers to efficiency and freedom.

Course of Study Necessary.

In a system of schools a course of study is necessary. This is beyond question. To allow each teacher to teach what he pleases to the children would quickly produce disorganization alike fatal to the teacher's success and disastrous to the children.

A course of study of the right kind brings unity and coordination into the schools and is indeed the chief unifying force. Of necessity, it prescribes that certain subjects shall be taught throughout the system, and that in each grade certain phases of these subjects shall be taught, corresponding to the development of the children. Some courses of study are not a means to the freedom of the teacher, but represent tyranny of thought and method. One kind of bad course of study is the minutely mandatory, which prescribes in detail what is to be taught each month and each week and each day, and imposes a uniform method for teaching each subject, leaving the teacher nothing to do but obey orders.

Minutely Mandatory Course Bad.

Such courses are not uncommon, unfortunately. Where they exist the most serious effect is seen in the teachers, — who soon cease to try to exercise judgment and become inert and helpless. It is said that the squirrels in the

parks have become so accustomed to being fed that they have entirely given up the frugal habits of their wood life, and no longer lay up stores of nuts for the winter; hence, if the winter is hard and the supply from visitors insufficient, the park authorities are compelled to feed the lazy little animals. I have more than once seen teachers in school systems as helpless intellectually as these squirrels are physically, and for like reasons. Their work has been prescribed to such a degree that they have ceased to exercise judgment. When given general instructions as to the accomplishment of certain results, but without detail of method, they have been hopelessly and pitifully at sea. I have also seen these same teachers after a season of freedom, in which they have been compelled to exercise their best abilities for definite, rational ends, grow greatly in strength and effectiveness, throw off the inertia and helplessness incident to machine work, and become strong and serviceable.

Weakens Teachers.

A course of study, then, should be broad in its outlines and suggestive rather than mandatory as to details and methods. It should require results, but these results should be stated in large rather than in small terms. They should be results of growth manifested in power to do new things, rather than ability to answer a few stereotyped questions.

Should be Broad and Suggestive.

The great fault of many systems of examinations is that the work required is so small and petty and minute that it belittles the teachers. Teachers become accustomed to drilling for the pitifully narrow questions asked in the examinations till they actually lose the power to think for themselves and to consider the needs of the children. The last thing that is present in their minds when planning their work is the development of the pupils. The imminent need

is to qualify them to answer a few specific questions and get their marks.

Further, a course of study should stimulate teachers to self-improvement. One of the claims made against teachers as a body, especially in discussions of that utterly futile question, "Is teaching a profession?" is that they are not scholarly. After much observation I am convinced that the defect, in so far as it exists, is due chiefly to the lack of impulse towards self-improvement in most of our formal school systems. A teacher going over the work of a grade soon acquires mastery of the few insignificant facts that must be imparted to the children, and is able each year to do the required work with less effort. Very few of us keep up a high degree of intellectual activity without some stimulus outside of ourselves, so these teachers, finding it possible to do their work, keep a respectable position among their associates, hold their places, and draw their pay, often settle into a condition of intellectual coma. It is always most offensive and saddening to hear flippant talk about old teachers, especially women; but it must be admitted that there are enough of the narrow, unscholarly, and unstudious among them to give some excuse for raillery, and these are the teachers, almost without exception, found in mechanical systems, whose work is exactly laid out for them, who receive from their superiors no stimulus to the exercise of originality and to broad, thorough investigation. The work in the schoolroom does not require study, except of a very meager sort; the administration does not welcome ideas, and the teacher naturally follows the line of least resistance.

Should Stimulate Teachers to Self-Improvement.

Hence, a course of study should necessitate much and continuous application on the part of the teacher; it should

not be too specific; it should allow room for the exercise of imagination and of originality; it should make necessary two definite kinds of study — one technically educational or paideutic; the other cultural. That this may be the effect, a course of study must be based upon educational principles. It must not represent a mere haphazard putting together of detailed instruction regarding the conventional subjects of school curricula, but rather it must be an orderly and philosophical presentation of the body of knowledge and the range of activities necessary for the proper education of the children.

A course should not be so superficial that it can be understood without study. It is good to make it necessary for teachers to study the curriculum and then to study educational principles in order to understand it. This is in itself broadening and strengthening and opens up to the teachers, especially the more thoughtful and the brighter, wide fields of inquiry and fine stimuli for growth.

Should Require Study for Its Comprehension.

The second line of study which curricula should make necessary for the teachers is cultural. We all know that other things being equal the best teacher is the one who knows the most, and we also know that teachers knowing very little can get along fairly well teaching children what is required by a very common kind of course of study. So true is this, that school authorities sometimes actually insist that knowledge is quite unimportant for teachers of little children; that ignorant teachers can do about as well as the more scholarly in the lower grades.

Should Require Study for General Culture.

A course of study should require of all teachers considerable knowledge. It should stimulate them to the acquisition

of knowledge in many lines. One of the arguments sometimes advanced against the introduction of nature study and other new branches into the grammar school course is that teachers do not know enough to teach them. One of the chief advantages of the introduction of such studies, the enriching of the curriculum, as President Eliot calls it, is that it makes students of the teachers. The effort which they make to qualify themselves to teach the new subjects is in itself cultivating, and it is fair to say that usually it is reasonably successful; but, better yet, they not only have more specific knowledge upon the subjects to be taught, but the windows of their minds are opened to a larger world. They begin to get the scholarly taste, to love study. I have seen many young teachers possessed of little professional ambition and little real knowledge grow into fine teachers of considerable scholarship and even culture, through the stimulating power of a broad and rich course of study.

INTERPRETATION OF THE COURSE OF STUDY

Requires Interpretation.

The course of study usually needs interpretation and comment. Left uninterpreted, in its printed form, its usefulness will necessarily be very limited. Some teachers will read it and interpret it correctly; some will read it and interpret it ignorantly; some will read only portions of it, those in particular relating to their own grades; and some will scarcely read it at all.

The Syllabus a Commentary.

The various methods resorted to for the fuller interpretation of the course of study, and for instructing the teachers as to its administration, are of two general kinds — written or printed syllabi, and meetings of various sorts. The syllabi are merely expansions of the course of study itself. If the course is at

all elaborate in design, and especially if it is suggestive rather than restrictive, such syllabi are quite necessary. They usually take the form of discussions as to the teaching of the different subjects in the curriculum, and if clear and explanatory, are very useful.

There is the danger, however, in large systems that some of the several supervisors will think that the superintendent's course of study is too liberal and will attempt in syllabi to restrict it and to give in minute detail instructions for carrying it out. This is a danger easily avoided, however, if the superintendent is alert.

Little needs to be said upon the subject of syllabi except that usually they should be in the nature of commentaries rather than positive and definite instruction as to details. This, however, is necessarily a matter of judgment, and in some school systems, particularly after the adoption of a new course of study or after a change of administration, it is wise to make the earlier syllabi quite specific in order to avoid, as far as possible, all floundering and loose, aimless experimentation such as one sometimes sees in school. Such syllabi, however, should be followed at the earliest possible moment by others which are expository and deal with principles.

Instruction to Teachers should Deal in Principles.

The general rule might be laid down here that all instruction to teachers, whether given in meetings or through syllabi, should deal with educational principles. The instruction, however minute, should be traced back to its philosophical source, so that the teachers may continually receive training in the thought that all sound advice rests upon fundamental, indisputable laws.

CHAPTER XII

Teachers' Meetings

The most common instrument of the supervising force for training teachers without destroying their freedom is the teachers' meeting. Of these meetings there are many sorts, varying in their degrees of usefulness. The particular kinds of meetings that should be employed in any locality must be determined by local conditions. No general law can be laid down on this point, but the general principle may be emphasized that all meetings for teachers should be educational, and it is surprising how the educational principles that we insist upon for the training of children apply in the training of teachers, and also how generally they are disregarded. The following are the various kinds of meetings in common use:

General or mass meetings.
Grade meetings.
Meetings of teachers of adjacent grades.
Subject meetings.
Round table meetings.
Classes for definite instruction.

These meetings vary as to the constitution of the audience and as to the instructors. Let us discuss in detail a few of the more important ones.

THE GENERAL MEETING

Every school system should have a few general meetings during the year, but only a few. They should be wholly meetings for stimulation and inspiration. Usually, they should be addressed by the superintendent or some of the supervisors, or by some person of ability in a special line, not connected with the local school system, who can put the teachers into touch with prevailing educational thought,—with the world beyond the local field.

General Meetings for Inspiration.

The interests of teachers and their needs are so various that the general meeting can supply only a very limited amount of the help needed, only that which all teachers of all grades need in common. It is of great value for teachers once in a while to be brought into the presence of a vigorous thinker, particularly if he belongs to a different school of thought from that dominating the school system. Such meetings tend to make broader and better teachers, but they do not supply the need for specific instruction which is necessarily felt by all good teachers, for it must be borne in mind that the only teachers who do not feel the need of assistance are the poor ones.

GRADE MEETINGS

Perhaps the most useful of all the classes of meetings is the grade meeting well conducted. The teachers of a single grade have very specific and common needs, and it is easy for the conductor to meet these needs. Meetings may be conducted by the superintendent or by the supervisors, or by teachers of special subjects. If the meetings are short, as those held after school must be, it is usually well to devote the

Grade Meetings for Discussion of Specific Topics.

time to the consideration of some one subject as taught in a particular grade. Whenever possible, the teachers themselves should take part in the discussion, to make known both their needs and their prevailing views. Talking to teachers is quite frequently talking in the dark. The speaker necessarily assumes a state of mind in his audience. If he assumes the wrong state of mind, then his talk is largely wasted. The supervisor and the superintendent talking to teachers in grade meetings should have an advantage over most speakers, in that they are supposed to know the conditions which they must meet; but frequently this is not the case. Meetings so conducted as to encourage free expression on the part of the teachers — especially on the part of those who are supposed to be a discordant element, out of harmony with the views of the administration — are apt to be very helpful meetings. Any supervisor should be glad of an expression of adverse opinion. If his views are sound he ought to be able to defend them in debate. No one has all the truth, and a comparison of opinions usually results in a nearer approach to it than any individual alone can attain.

Exemplary Classes Helpful.

A very helpful plan is to have a class taught in the presence of the teachers at the meeting. This is more easily done in the lower grades than in the higher, because the children are less likely to be conscious, and are more likely to act naturally. If possible, such a class should be conducted by a good teacher who is in accord with the educational theories of the superintendent, and it should show good work and normal work. The class should not be drilled beforehand so as to make a good appearance, but should do the kind of work that is ordinarily done by it in the school. After the lesson is over and the class dismissed, there should be a very full and free discussion

of the methods employed. The teacher who conducted the class and the presiding officer should be ready to answer all questions, explain all methods, and make clear any reason for anything done that was not made clear by the presentation itself. This is a most excellent plan for explaining a course of study, — the concrete is so much more easily comprehended than the abstract.

Every superintendent must at times wonder if he has lost the power of using the English language. Instructions and explanations, given in what seems to him at the time the simplest and most lucid language, are interpreted in so many ways. We approach almost all subjects with a prejudice. It is practically impossible for a mind to be absolutely open, so that words produce very different effects upon different minds. Language is at best a very imperfect medium for the expression of thought, and we necessarily interpret that which we see and hear according to our own state of mind and our preconceived notions. A failure to recognize this fact is largely responsible for wide differences of opinion, for so-called heresy, for religious persecution, and often for war. Teachers are not exceptional in this respect, and I have often seen the most absurd construction put upon courses of study and have been held responsible for the most foolish educational practice, which had never even occurred to me as possible, because of the false interpretation of the printed course of study. The teachers' meeting in which the class has been presented has often served to clear up these clouds and send the teachers away with a better understanding of the whole scheme of work.

It might be said in passing that another excellent way to accomplish this result is to send teachers who do not under-

stand to visit those who do, that they may see the work going on regularly in the class-room. I recall the horror with which sand tables and the use of manual construction were first viewed in one city. They seemed to people who did not know how to use them foolish toys for the wasting of the time of the children, but just as soon as a few of the brighter teachers comprehended the value of such illustration, and the practical results of the employment of motor activities, there were centers for the diffusion of knowledge. The tables showing the illustrations of historical stories and geographical phenomena were brought before grade meetings and explained. Other teachers were encouraged to visit those who were using these tools intelligently, and in a very short time the entire misconception passed away and the majority of the teachers had a fairly clear notion of the use of constructive work for illustrative purposes. It would have taken years of ordinary talking and writing to accomplish the same result.

Value of School Visits by Teachers.

The work of the grade meeting should be specific and clear, one thing at a time being made plain. The teachers should go away feeling helped and stimulated. If the average teacher goes away from a meeting bored, there has been something wrong with the meeting. Superintendents and supervisors conducting meetings need to be especially careful to avoid tedium. It is so easy to become enamored of the sound of our own voices that we hold helpless bodies of teachers in bondage, as the teachers themselves hold helpless bodies of children, while we enjoy ourselves in talking. The talkative superintendent or supervisor is the *bête noire* of the profession.

The teachers should always go away from a meeting feeling not discouraged, but stimulated and strengthened. Scolding a body of teachers for poor work may make them resentful and blue, but it will not secure the best work. We all need positive and cheering stimulation rather than fault-finding. A new and alluring idea is worth a dozen destructive criticisms, for securing the best work possible by a body of teachers.

Teachers should Go from the Meeting Encouraged.

THE SUBJECT MEETING

A very valuable kind of meeting is the "subject meeting," that is, a meeting for the discussion of some particular subject in the curriculum. This meeting should be for the discussion of the principles underlying the teaching of the subject as a whole, and should not be confined to particular grades. For instance, it is a good thing to gather a group of teachers teaching geography in different grades and to discuss the principles of the subject fully as applied to them. One of the dangers of a graded system of schools is the narrowing of teachers. Teachers who give instruction to children of a single grade very soon learn the rigmarole of the course and usually fall into the routine and cease active intellectual effort. Their views are likely to be limited to the imparting of a small section of knowledge to children of approximately the same attainments. Now, it stands to reason that no teacher can do the best work in any grade, who does not have a comprehensive view of the scope of the subject. A teacher who is to teach geography to a third-grade class needs to have, not merely a knowledge of what is taught in the third grade, but a broad view of the

Well to Study Subjects as Pursued in Different Grades.

subject of geography as a whole, its educational and practical value, the principles that underlie instruction in it, and then to apply these to that portion of the subject-matter assigned to this grade. The teacher who knows merely the work of the grade and has no comprehensive view of the subject is like the mechanic who drives rivets and knows nothing of the machine upon which he is working. The difference is that between the artist and the artisan.

THE MEETING OF ADJACENT GRADES

Meetings of Teachers of Adjacent Grades.

Another kind of meeting, with partially the same object, is the meeting of teachers of adjacent grades. The fourth-grade teachers, for instance, should meet occasionally with the third-grade teachers and occasionally with the fifth-grade teachers. They should "look before and after." They should know the general characteristics of children who are coming to them, and, in particular, the kind of training they are receiving, and they should know, also, what is expected in the next grade, so that their work may fit into the general scheme and be most useful. Such meetings are especially important for teachers of the higher grades. Teachers, in particular, of the highest grammar grades and the lower high school grades should meet at not infrequent intervals for a discussion of their common interests. One of the great troubles that the school superintendent has to meet and adjust is the continual complaint of the teachers of the higher grades that the teachers of the grade below have not properly done their work and that the children come from them unprepared. This often is due merely to difference in standard and a failure to comprehend the preparation that has been given. Such complaint is particularly common when pupils pass from one

institution to another, as from the grammar school to the high school, and from the high school to the college, and it portrays, more than anything else, ignorance on the part of the high school teachers and of the college teachers of what has been done. The emphasis has been put upon what has not been done, and little effort has been made to discover the other. If the teachers could be brought together, a mutual understanding could easily be effected and much friction and much loss to the children be saved.

At these meetings, sometimes, it is well to discuss particular subjects, as, for instance, English; at other times, to discuss the general character of the pupils promoted, the teachers of the higher grades telling frankly the defects which they discover in pupils who have come to them, and the teachers in the lower grades telling what they have done for the children who are to come and what may be expected from them. The value of such meetings needs no full discussion, but its recognition is not common enough.

SPECIAL CLASSES

Special Classes for the Deficient.

It oftens becomes necessary for supervisors and teachers of special subjects to give specific instruction to teachers in these subjects. Sometimes all the instruction that is needed can be given in the grade meeting. Sometimes this is insufficient. Some teachers, for instance, cannot teach music or cannot teach drawing, and are a constant source of annoyance. What shall be done with them? Shall they be excused from attempting to teach these subjects, or shall they go on and teach them badly? Neither seems very desirable. I have found that classes conducted by competent supervisors have been most helpful, and usually all that has been needed has

been to offer such classes for voluntary attendance. The teachers have been distressed by their inability to do their work and have gladly availed themselves of the opportunity to improve. Sometimes it has become necessary to insist upon a particularly weak teacher, who was particularly self-satisfied, attending these special meetings. Such meetings, naturally, may be held in the afternoon, sometimes, even, in the evening, because the teachers realize that they are getting, simply for the effort of attending, valuable instruction in some important art.

MEETINGS OF PRINCIPALS WITH THEIR TEACHERS

Meetings of this kind should be held regularly, and not infrequently, for various purposes. For instance, that the teachers of the school may become acquainted with one another; that they may know the work of the grades above and below; that there may be unity and harmony in the general scheme of the school; that individual and troublesome cases may be discussed, and that advice or instruction from the supervising authorities may be expounded. It is also well for principals, if the schools are not too large, to take up some specific study with their teachers, something of either general cultural value or professional cultural value. Circumstances will determine which is better. In most cases a book of professional cultural value — some work on psychology or educational principles — makes the best subject for such study.

MEETINGS WITH ASSISTANTS

The need for meetings is not limited to the teachers. The superintendent should conduct meetings of his immediate assistants or supervisors. These meetings necessarily are for

the discussion of general plans of work and to make sure of the existence of harmony in the administrative force.

MEETINGS OF SUPERINTENDENT AND PRINCIPALS

Meetings of superintendents and principals, however, are perhaps more than any others the key to the educational situation. They give the superintendent an opportunity to impress himself upon the leading minds engaged in actual school work. The time devoted to these meetings is precious and should not be spent in the idle discussion of minor details. Sometimes it becomes necessary for the superintendent to take time in a meeting to explain some administrative regulation, or some matter of comparatively small consequence, but the danger is that all the time will be taken up in this way. It is usually much better to send out written or printed instructions as to these matters of detail, and to devote the time of teachers' meetings to educational discussion.

Superintendent should Discuss Principles with Principals.

It is well to take up with the principals the course of study and to discuss its underlying thought, its philosophy, its educational aim. If these meetings can be upon the "round-table" plan of general discussion, it is very much better. Of all meetings these should be the freest, and the principals should be encouraged to tell what they think. The superintendent should not attempt to do all of the talking. The topic having been announced in the call or earlier, it is well to have some principal lead the discussion and others follow. The superintendent presiding should put in a word here and there if necessary in order to keep the discussion in the right line, and he should usually close it with a summary. At such meetings all kinds of subjects

may be discussed which relate to the work of the schools; sometimes a particular topic, such as arithmetic or grammar; sometimes a question of method; sometimes a new book, or a new theory in education, such as the value of motor activities; but these meetings should be especially educational and should tend to bring about theoretical and actual harmony in the educational system. I count this one of the most important meetings, for principals will, and necessarily must, largely dominate their own schools, and if the superintendent can get sympathy and active co-operation for his educational ideas and their administration, he has won the day. And if his ideas will not stand a fair discussion in a body of reasonably intelligent principals, it will probably be well for him to revise them.

Principals Dominate Their Schools.

In general, voluntary meetings for study are better than required meetings, but in most systems it is necessary to have many of the meetings with compulsory attendance. It is to be borne in mind that what I have said here as applied to the city system would need a slight modification if the system is very large and divided into districts. In such a city as Chicago, Philadelphia, or New York, for instance, the various kinds of meetings which I have described should be conducted in each of the districts, the district superintendent and his assistants taking the place of the general superintendent and his associates. In such systems, however, the general superintendent should try to exert a similar influence upon the body of district superintendents, and should also meet occasionally in mass meeting the principals of the city. No city is too large to admit of this.

Organization in Large Cities.

TIME OF MEETING

Now as to the time of conducting these meetings. Commonly they are held after school or on Saturdays. After school the teachers are physically and intellectually fagged and are not in condition to get the best from the teachers' meeting. Doubtless sometimes it is absolutely necessary to hold meetings at this time, especially meetings of principals with their teachers and meetings for special instruction. On Saturday the teachers are not so tired, but Saturday is the teachers' holiday. They, especially those of the gentler sex, want to go shopping or have mending to do, and they begrudge the morning given to teachers' meetings. They are apt to come in not the best frame of mind and to go away without the best results.

Meetings after School and on Saturdays.

It is a generally accepted principle in most of the states that institutes may be conducted for several days in each year during school time, the schools being closed and the teachers required to attend. This is a perfectly sound principle, and in all cases where the institutes are well conducted the schools are, in the end, the gainers; but this principle has not been applied generally in cities having their own systems for the instruction of teachers. The same principle should apply there. The important teachers' meeting should be held during school hours, when the teachers are fresh and consider themselves on duty, the schools being dismissed for that purpose.

THE GRADE INSTITUTE

A very effective and a most useful system of grade meetings is as follows: The schools of a single grade, as the first

or eighth, are dismissed for the day. The teachers assemble in a central place and are given a solid day's hard work.

All-Day Meetings of Grades.

The day may be divided into four periods — two in the morning and two in the afternoon — varying the work. One period, for instance, may be taken by the superintendent in the discussion of history; one by the supervisor of music for his particular subject; one by the supervisor of drawing for his subject; and the fourth by the superintendent, or a supervisor, upon some other theme. Taking one day a week and one grade at a time, it is possible, easily, to get around the grades of a system four times a year, thus giving four full days of instruction to all teachers.

More can be accomplished in these four days of instruction than in any number of after-school meetings or Saturday morning meetings. The plan is heartily commended by those who have tried it. It is necessary, of course, to educate boards of education to an appreciation of the value of such meetings so that they will consent to the closing of the schools. It is really but a form of institute, and as such falls regularly under the laws of most states.

THE INSTITUTE

It may be well in this connection to add a few words about the Teachers' Institute, conducted under state or county auspices. This institute is quite general throughout the country. In its design and in its possibilities it is most beneficent. In some states, and in some counties in other states, it fulfils its function well. Unfortunately, however, in too many places institutes are conducted in violation of many of the principles here laid down for the conduct of teachers' meetings.

The Teachers' Institute is a serious business affair. It is supported by the state in order that the teachers may be made better. It is quite necessary that some such arrangement exist; if for nothing else, to insure normal progress in educational principles and methods. Even if all the teachers of the country were graduates of normal schools, well versed in the principles of their profession before undertaking to teach, it would still be necessary to have these institutes for the sake of brightening the teachers up, of presenting to them new thoughts and plans, and of keeping them abreast of the world.

Institutes Important.

Hence the institute should be primarily and chiefly professional. The most common form of institute is that which keeps the teachers of all grades together for the greater part of the week and offers lectures or addresses to them *en masse*. This is open to serious criticism. The best institute combines in proper proportions the general lecture and specific instruction. The former should be upon a high cultural and professional plane. The latter should be definite and adapted to specific needs. In order that this may be the case, it is necessary to divide the teachers of the institute into classes according to their grades of work.

Should be Professional.

Divided into Classes.

The mass institute has resulted in the development of a peculiar type, — the professional institute lecturer, who has become little more than an entertainer. The entertainment feature has come to predominate over the professional, so that in some places it is practically impossible to secure attention for an address that is professional. The institute entertainer has learned what is expected of him and goes about with a bag full of quips, destructive as the winds of Æolus, and if by any

Dangers of Mass Institutes.

chance a new lecturer has not provided himself with such a bag, he is at once tabooed.

A simple classification for county institutes is this: The rural teachers from the ungraded schools constitute one class. Their needs are quite uniform and can easily be met by the instructor who is familiar with rural schools. The teachers of the graded schools should be divided according to grades, into as many classes as their numbers and the number of the instructors admit, and instructors provided who are familiar with the specific needs of the different grades. Not oftener than once a day during the institute there should be a general meeting addressed by some speaker who is able to talk profitably to large masses of people, but the address should be both professional and cultural and not to any considerable degree for the sake of entertaining. It is true that a certain amount of social gain is received by the teachers from the entertainment features of these institutes, but that is not what they are held for and should be kept in the background.

Not Many Meetings in a Day.

The usual county institute occupies the greater part of a week. Commonly the authorites, feeling that they must put the time all in profitably, arrange for three sessions a day, and sometimes for extras. During these three sessions in the ordinary institute, the teachers sit and listen, or have the appearance of listening, to speakers. The result is what might be expected. After the first day, and also after the first session of each day, a manifest lethargy settles over the audience so that the speakers who come late find it very difficult indeed to hold their auditors at all.

This occupying of the time is not a measure of economy but is one of waste. A very much better plan is to have but two

formal sessions, — a morning and an evening one — the morning session to be divided into periods, not more than three, of not more than an hour in length each. During these periods the different classes or divisions of teachers can be given technical instruction in three subjects by as many specialists. During the evening it is well to have a general lecture by some one inspiring talker before the teachers as a body. The afternoon may well be given up to excursions and the many social opportunities which mean much in the life of the average teacher, especially from rural districts.

If county superintendents, who usually have charge of these institutes, would have the courage of their convictions and plan their institutes upon a basis as liberal as this, they would soon find that the increased interest and intensity of attention would much more than make up for the apparent loss of time. The many meetings give the institute an element of mental dissipation, which, like all other forms of dissipation, is dangerous.

Reaction Necessary to Learning.

Continual listening without that reaction necessary to complete the circle of learning is dissipating for teachers as well as for children. Hence, as many as possible of the section meetings at least should be open for discussion by the teachers. In this way the instructors would find out the mental and professional status of their auditors, and their needs, and the teachers themselves roused to voluntary activity would profit vastly more than when they simply sit decorously and listen. In teaching teachers in institutes we should not violate the principles of teaching that we are seeking to inculcate.

CHAPTER XIII

The Visitation of the School

Visiting schools is a universally recognized function of supervising officers of whatever grade. They all do it, but not all in the same way or the same spirit. Indeed, the quality of a supervisor may be pretty accurately gauged by the character of his visits to the schoolroom. These visits naturally will vary in character according to their purpose, but they should seldom vary in spirit, which should always be one of cheer and helpfulness.

Motives of Visitation to Observe and to Help.

The two common and manifest motives of visitation are to ascertain what is being done and to aid the teacher. The former is sure to be prominent in the teacher's mind, the latter should be in the visitor's; and ultimately the teachers should come to welcome the visits of the supervising officials as likely to bring help and inspiration.

Of course the visitor must observe, even critically, and must be able to judge the teacher's work as a result, but this does not need to be made conspicuous. If it is, it is sure to defeat its own ends and bring about an abnormal state in both children and teacher which renders the observation valueless.

What is this teacher doing? What does she need? What can I do to help her? These questions should be written in the conscience of every official visiting schools.

THE MANNER OF THE VISIT

The visitor should be governed by common sense. No definite rules can be laid down. The character of the visit should be governed by its circumstances. But usually the visitor should step in quietly so as not to rouse or disturb the pupils, should greet the teacher courteously and, if there is opportunity without disturbing an exercise, should engage her in a brief but bright conversation to put her at her ease, and then should become absorbed in what is going on, as an interested and kindly observer, and not a cold and distant critic. Especially he should avoid all appearance of being a spy or looking for occasion to find fault. He should get on friendly terms with both teacher and children and should enter into the spirit of what they are doing so that his interest is manifest to them. This will restore the equilibrium and bring about natural conditions.

Should Get on Friendly Terms with Teacher and Children.

Perhaps the chief thing to observe is the spirit of the school, its atmosphere, that psychological and social condition which grows out of the relations existing, the motive and spirit of the work, in short, the life of the school, which is its real educative force. This is, of course, intangible and invisible, but it can be spiritually discerned; only, however, by one who enters into it sympathetically, not by one who looks on coldly, ready to find fault upon the slightest pretext.

Observe the Spirit of the School.

The method of the recitation will necessarily be observed, and this observation will include the attitude of the children toward the teacher and toward the work; whether the knowledge is clear and definite or vague and misleading; whether the answers are

Observe the Method of the Recitation.

categorical and bookish, or free and suggestive of enlarged interests; whether the teacher places the greater emphasis upon a few exact statements or upon wider interests; whether the children are the more eager to learn or to tell. These and other well-known tests will be silently applied.

Observe the Children at Their Seats.

The observer will also note the children at their seats, how they are conducting themselves, how they are employed; whether they are absorbed in their work or easily diverted by chance occurrences; whether they are pursuing subjects earnestly or merely memorizing.

But the spirit of the school includes all this. The careful observer will see whether the physical conditions of the school are the best obtainable, whether the temperature is normal, the lighting right, the seats of suitable size and arrangement.

These and other things are taken in by the visitor while he is apparently wholly occupied with the work presented. That is, he must learn to see without looking; because too conspicuous observation of metaphysical conditions disturbs them.

HELPING THE TEACHER

Having *seen* and *felt* the conditions of the school, how is the visitor to help the teacher?

Little can be done at the time: a word of encouragement, a bit of praise, a suggestive question, an inspiring or stimulating remark, all aptly dropped in such a way as not to disturb the order of things. If there occurs an intermission or a brief interval between classes, a pleasant and helpful little conversation may be wedged in. All should be done naturally and easily, so that when the visit is over the teacher is sorry

and will look forward with pleasant anticipation to the next one.

Of course sometimes it may be well for a supervisor to take a class and give a lesson to illustrate some particular point, but never to show how much better he can do it than the teacher. The teacher should never be humiliated before the class by suggestion, criticism, or even example.

Noisy and boisterous visitations should be avoided. I have seen visits which reminded me of the Pharisee of old who had a trumpet blown before him, only in this case the visitor blew his own trumpet, as if to say, "Behold, children, how great a man am I. I condescend to speak to your teacher. Is it not noble?"

Visitor should be Quiet.

In many instances nothing further is needed than can be done during the visit. But sometimes much more is required.

If the teacher is doing badly and needs severe criticism, if she is discouraged and needs brightening, if the work is especially original and suggestive and merits further consideration and development — under these and other special conditions the visit should be followed by the private conference either at the school or at the office of the visitor.

CHAPTER XIV

The Private Conference

This means of helping teachers and improving the work of the schools is not used enough; we deal too exclusively with teachers in masses.

Naturally one of the most helpful features of the school organization is some degree of personal acquaintance between the officials and the teachers. While this is easier to secure in a small system than in a large one, it is entirely possible in even the biggest system. However large the system, supervising officials should be so distributed that at least some of them may come into personal contact with all the teachers and know their ambitions and aims, and their merits as well as their faults and weaknesses, and may give the sort of inspiration and strength which is given only in personal contact. Any system that is so organized as to fail to secure this personal contact between the teachers of the class-rooms and the officials who are to direct them and pass upon them, in so far fails to do its duty, and this applies equally to systems large and small. The personal, sympathetic intercourse of those who know more with those who know less, of the stronger directing minds with the directed minds which need help, is the *sine qua non* of good school administration.

Personal Contact with Teachers.

All serious criticism of teachers should be in private and, except in cases that are manifestly and absolutely hopeless,

should be positive and suggestive rather than negative and condemnatory. More teachers can be stimulated to good work by helpful and kindly suggestions than by merely pointing out faults. Yet faults must be pointed out, and early. Superintendents are often timid about private conferences and allow teachers to go on in wrong courses rather than perform the disagreeable task of criticising. This is not kind, and teachers who fail ultimately because of these faults may with reason say, "Why did you not tell me?"

Criticism of Teachers should be in Private.

The teacher should go away from such a conference encouraged rather than discouraged. Indeed a conference of the right sort would often remove discouragement. Many a discouraged young teacher whose school has become a dreadful burden, and who goes home tired in body and mind to spend an anxious and sometimes a tearful night, could be saved all this distress if a sympathetic principal or supervisor were to spend a half hour in private conference with her, bringing the results of his experience and his superior wisdom to the reinforcement of her limited skill and experience. It is always a good plan to talk things over sympathetically and frankly with the weak teacher. Of course the private conference may be killing, but it should not be; it is entirely possible to point out faults and at the same time to point out remedies in such a way as to give encouragement rather than discouragement, and this is one of the chief functions of the supervising officer. A hint, a simple suggestion of some new plan, the stimulating of a new interest, the giving of a new point of view, accompanied by kindly interest and encouragement, will frequently make a good teacher of a poor one.

Teachers should be Encouraged.

It should never be forgotten that the purpose of class-room visitation and its consequent conference is that of all school organization, to help the teachers teach, not to display the greatness of the official, not merely to inform him of conditions, but to encourage, to uplift, to inspire, in short, to help the teachers teach.

In all efforts to help the teachers, through meetings, class-room visitation or private conference, our principle applies. Encouragement, praise when possible, evidence of confidence, suggestion and inspiration — all positive forces — are worth vastly more than fault-finding criticism, even if astute, scolding, "grinding," evidence of distrust, discouragement — all negative forces. The latter, working through fear, produce at best death-dealing drudgery; the former, acting through buoyancy and ambition, produce that joyous effort which is creative.

The private conference may also be used with profit in the positive work of developing educational ideas and spreading them throughout a system of schools. Suppose a supervisor has worked out wholly or partially an educational scheme which promises well, what is the best way to get it into operation? There are the various ways of which I have spoken. Visitation of the class-rooms and meetings should be employed; but it is very easy, as all superintendents know, for teachers to misunderstand instruction given while there are classes present and also that given in an address before a body of teachers. Some teachers can never be made to see the force or method of a new scheme except by first-hand contact and observation. Others will grasp a new idea much more quickly.

Distribution of Good Ideas.

It is well for the supervisor with an idea to pick out a

few teachers who quickly grasp ideas, sit down with them and carefully explain what he wants done, give the reasons for it, let them see the philosophy of his plan and its motive, supply them with the necessary material and tell them to go into their class-rooms and work it out. Usually they will feel complimented by the confidence and will take great interest in the development of the plan. This is one use of the private conference. The work goes into the class-room, and is made practical, and any defects in the original scheme are discovered. In later conferences these are talked over and remedies are suggested which in turn are taken back to the schoolroom. When the plan has not only been developed, but has been thus worked out, it is ready to be used as an object lesson to other teachers. Not infrequently the suggestion comes from the teacher to the supervisor directly, or has been derived from work observed in her room. In such cases the teacher becomes the adviser, and the supervisor, first the pupil, then the helper.

There is a sort of freemasonry among teachers, and others very quickly hear of these experiments and become desirous to see them and imitate them and, without any especial effort, the particularly good work of the strong teachers, resulting from the private conference, becomes the standard for many other teachers. A single good teacher in a large school working out some interesting plan has been known to modify the work of the entire school, and so again society profits by the individual as well as strengthening the individual, and this is social freedom. This work, which has resulted from the private conference, can also be extended by direct efforts. Teachers may be sent to visit it, model classes may be brought before meetings of teachers showing

both how the work is done and its results. This feature has been treated under the head of teachers' meetings.

So the supervising officer becomes a kind of distributor of blessings, receiving what teachers can give and giving what is received to those who need it; and he must not, if he would be worthy of his office, let any amount of detail work, any consideration for the mechanical part of the administration, stand in the way of his personal co-operative work with the individual teachers. For let us remember that school is a society in which all share the good or ill; that this is as true of the teachers as it is of the children.

Recall what was said in a previous chapter, that individual freedom is often impaired by the excessive demands of the social whole and the obliterating of the individual, but that true freedom is to be secured, not by a return to isolation, which is in reality extreme bondage, but rather by a proper use of society. The individual teacher should be strengthened, not weakened, by belonging to a system. The strength and the wisdom of the whole are greater than that of the individual, but only when each individual is encouraged to exercise his own strength and also to share with others. So that for teachers as for children a school system should be a co-operative society, having for its motto "each for all and all for each," and the administrative forces fulfil their function when they so distribute the common good that each individual has all of his own and all that he can receive from the others.

CHAPTER XV

Judging Results of Teaching

One of the perennial problems of school administration is that of judging and rating teachers.

Recorded and defensible judgment of teachers is necessary at times to determine whether they shall be retained in service. This is the lowest use of rating, and, on the whole, the most easily made. Some definite system of recorded judgment also is needed when teachers are to be selected from a corps for promotion to higher places, as principalships. In some school systems, too, advances in salary are determined by an official rating. For these purposes an accurate, definite, and reliable standard is needed.

No universally satisfactory system of rating has yet been approximated, and so far as I know, no method has been adopted which is satisfactory even locally. Yet great varieties of tests have been made, ranging all the way from the unrecorded and unchecked individual judgment of a supervising officer to the most elaborate plan of marking by points; and while some of these work fairly well, all are criticised. This may be due partly to the fact that those who are unfavorably affected by such judgments are not to be expected to be satisfied.

What constitutes excellence in a teacher? Is there any one characteristic, or any one class of characteristics, which can be put down definitely as superior to all others and most

to be desired in a teacher? Theoretically, yes; otherwise what does the science of teaching mean? How can there be a science of education unless there are certain classifiable facts relating to its principles? And if the points of good teaching can be definitely classified, it is not difficult to see that the teachers who manifest these are the good teachers, and, yet, so general are our principles, and so varied the characteristics of various successful teachers, that the difficulties of proper classification and rating are not to be wondered at.

Teaching Difficult to Judge.

Teaching, as has often been said in this book, is a spiritual process, and its results are not immediately manifest. If a man is placed in charge of a gang of workmen, there are always available standards of comparison so that the employer can quickly determine whether the man is an efficient foreman or not. A salesman in a shop with other salesmen very soon makes it evident to the proprietor how he compares with his fellows, but the teacher's work is of so recondite a character, and apparent results are so often fallacious, that it is doubtful if we shall ever arrive at a strictly satisfactory standard. And yet, it does seem that we might have something fuller, more reasonable, and more satisfactory to those marked than anything yet attempted. But when all is said and done, it is so largely a matter of judgment, almost of instinct, that probably the sufferers by any system of rating can never be satisfied.

If a salesman, to refer to him again, week after week sells only fifty per cent as much as a fellow salesman at another counter, he must, if at all fair-minded, be compelled to admit that he is not so good a salesman; but the inferior teacher is practically never ready to make this admission. He sees excellences in his own work which he is sure his superior

officer does not take into consideration in marking him. There may be some defects which are noted, but he is quite confident that they are overbalanced by unnoted merits.

With regard to the three classes of cases in which the rating of teachers is utilized, as has been already pointed out, the case of the teacher who is so poor as to merit discharge, or to be in danger of discharge, is the most easily judged. In an ordinary system the faults that are serious enough to reach this extremity are usually flagrant, — manifest upon the surface: the order is bad, the teacher's disposition is offensive, the teacher is ignorant, the class does not attain even a reasonable degree of proficiency. Scarcely ever are less manifest errors than these treated as sufficiently bad to justify discharge, and these can easily be discovered without a system of marking.

Very Poor Teacher Easily Detected.

Inasmuch as it is quite necessary to have some principle of rating to serve as a basis for promotion to higher positions, it is to be taken for granted that such a rating is possible. It is undoubtedly more difficult to reach a just determination for promotion than when the only question is whether the teacher is to be retained in the system, — many more elements enter in, including those characteristics not manifested by the teacher in the class-room but which are required in the higher field. For example, for a principalship, executive ability is a special characteristic, the possession of which it is difficult to determine in the case of teachers who have not had opportunity to display it. Still, the problem is a fair and just one, and we will discuss the principles involved a little later.

Difficulty of Judging for Promotion.

As to the third use of a rating system, — the determination of salaries, — it must be confessed that at present there is no

status sufficiently reliable to justify it. Theoretically, the best teachers should get the best salaries. Practically, in large school systems there is so much danger of injustice because of the uncertainty of standards that the attempt cannot safely and successfully be made at present. If reliance is placed upon marking systems, there are differences among markers, and, further, all the evils incident to marking systems are introduced. If judgment of superior officers is the basis, poor human nature is the sure preventive of exact justice. Moreover, no supervising officer could long survive the antagonisms created and the charges of partiality made. So no attempt will here be made to consider the use of any system for the purpose of determining salaries, except in so far as they may be determined by the grade of license held or the position occupied.

It may be said here that one of the chief advantages of a definite system of grading teachers is the protection which it affords the supervising officer who must make decisions. His protection, however, does not require an elaborate, heart-breaking system, but a general record is sufficient, made as the result of observations from time to time, stated in broad terms, supported by the various sorts of written evidence that the principal or supervisor can always collect.

Personality and "Results" Bases for Judging.

There are two general bases for the grading of teachers for all purposes, both of which are valid and should be treated as elements of all decisions. One is the teacher's personality and general influence over the pupils in stimulating endeavor, arousing interest, and affecting character. The other is what we commonly call results, meaning the more definite evidences of good teaching, such as the possession of knowledge by the pupil after a period of instruction. For the just

balancing of these two elements in an official judgment, no general rule can be laid down. It will vary with the cases, for after all we can never get away from the human element.

Their Relative Value.

It must be admitted that some teachers who would be rated as poor, according to any accepted technical or exact standard, have many admirable qualities which make them desirable companions for the young, and considering education in the broad sense, these elements are of great importance. There are also many teachers who, according to any plan of rating that could be employed in a large school system, would rank high, with whom we would not care to associate ourselves daily, and consequently with whom we would not care to have our children associated. These fine distinctions cannot be put down in any book under any heading, but they will inevitably influence the judgment of the wise and observant supervisor if the exercise of judgment is allowed, — that is, if a determination with regard to the standing of the teacher is not made to depend wholly upon technical and exact ratings, — and they should enter in. Sometimes one is disposed to think that they are even more important than what is known technically as good teaching. I recall once taking a distinguished visitor — a college president who was a member of the board of education — to visit a certain school, and leading him into the kindergarten. The kindergartner was a young woman of fine presence, culture, beauty and dignity of character, but failing noticeably in those characteristics which one could mark, and yet it was a happy and wholesome kindergarten. When I spoke of some of the defects of the kindergartner to the learned doctor, he remarked, "Well, the children are in good society anyway." It set me thinking. I am not sure but that those children

were more benefited by the good society they were in than they would have been under a strictly orthodox and proper kindergartner who might have carried out established principles with entire exactness.

The argument from all this is that in all estimates made of teachers, personality should be included, and by this is meant that vague, indefinite, spiritual quality which cannot be put down in words, much less indicated in figures or other symbols, such as are used commonly in the formal rating of teachers; and this means that somebody's judgment must be exercised.

Dangers in Rigid Tests.

There are certain features of what is known as civil service reform, which, carried to the extreme, are disastrous in any system, and particularly so in the spiritual work of the teacher; and if human nature cannot be trusted to judge of personality and to give that judgment official valuation, then there is no such thing as estimating good teaching. In trying to get away from pull and favoritism we are in danger of going so far as to do away with human interest and to reduce our school systems to the condition of machines, which is always one of the perils of large systems.

RESULTS

Results more than Fitting Pupils to Pass Examination.

The second and more commonly recognized basis for rating is what are ordinarily called results. Now, what are results? No term could be more misleading. As usually interpreted, the least important product of the teacher's art is the only thing included in this term, and the commonplace, iron-clad teacher can get the kind of results which extreme officialism wants. The most simple, direct, and

easily ascertained results are those which by some have been exalted into an educational deity, viz.: the ability to answer questions of fact, in other words, examinations. Many teachers like to teach for such a standard because it is easy. Their work is cut out for them; they are not compelled to think, except in so far as mental acumen may be employed in inferring what the next examination is going to be from what the preceding have been, and then drilling the children on the supposititious questions to be asked. Of course, this is not teaching, but it is what results from this method of rating either pupils or teachers. If the teacher knows that she is to be rated for any purpose according to the number of children who "pass," she naturally will bend every effort to have a large number of children pass, and if the promotion is based upon a set examination, furnished from headquarters, the shrewd teacher very quickly learns what sort of examination is coming and drills her children accordingly.

Under such a system it very commonly happens that the poorest schools, judged according to a broad standard of education, regularly get the largest number of "certificates," and the poor teachers, judged by spiritual results, are many of them able to drill the few inconsequential facts required for the examination into their children so that they can "pass," while the good teachers, whose influence upon the lives of the children is broadening, sweetening, and stimulating, fail to prepare the children to meet the required standard because their time has been spent upon better things. Their children know much more than those who can pass the examination, but it is not the same knowledge, and it is not so easily categoried for question and answer; consequently it is of no use. Interest under such a system

is disastrous, because interest leads minds afield and asks many questions.

So it is evident that for a proper basis we must broaden the term "results." Aside from the ability to answer questions, what should be the result of a good teacher's teaching?

First, interest in the work itself and in its larger phases. If the subject is history, a result of the study should be not so much the ability to remember facts and their dates, as the kind of interest which prompts the student to read much more than is required for the examination, and to continue to be a student of history after the work of the school is ended.

Interest.

Second, the kind of knowledge that makes the pursuit of further knowledge possible, which is quite different from the ability to answer the ordinary examination questions. It means the possession of salient and suggestive points, — those points which furnish apperceiving centers for new knowledge, and which are perhaps most noticeably manifested in an inquiring mind and an intelligent curiosity.

Apperceiving Centers.

A third result is the ability to pursue a study, not merely when prompted by a secondary end, such as a prize or a mark, but for the sake of the study itself, and to pursue it beyond the mere requirements of the school with intensity, continuity, and success. The old-fashioned *application*, in other words, and the power of abstraction from surrounding influences and from secondary impulses, must be added to the kind of interest of which I have spoken. The child acquires the power of intense application from being intensely interested, and the habit of such application comes from repeated absorption in a valuable occupation. These are typical results. It is not by any

Application.

means an exhaustive list, but is named simply to illustrate that product of teaching which is higher than the ordinarily valued "result."

Now the question arises, can these results be definitely ascertained so as to form a basis of rating, and if so, how? It certainly is not easy to formulate any definite plan of rating the spiritual and higher intellectual results of teaching. Here again we must rely upon the judgment of supervising officials, and get away absolutely, but gradually, from the fetich of the civil service reformer that everything can be determined by examination. In the end our schools will be better off. Is it possible, however, to make such rating?

First, as to interest: There are several indications which may guide the supervisor. Commonly a visit to the classroom is a fairly reliable, though inadequate, guide. **Indications of Interest.** The shrewd supervisor notes the quality of interest shown. It is to be remembered that the interest referred to here is a very different thing from that nervousness which is often manifested during the recitation and which passes for interest — the apparent excitement of children over what is being presented to them that is shown in an undue eagerness to talk, in the raising and waving of hands. Teachers themselves are often deceived by this fictitious and superficial interest. It bears about the same relation to vital interest that the excitation of the muscles of a frog's legs by a galvanic battery does to a good jump, and it is often the product of the professional smile and the professional fluttering of the teacher, — the substitution of cutaneous excitement for activity of the spirit. Children in this state of unwholesome and deceptive activity bob up and down continually like little jacks-in-the-box with the hope of catching

the teacher's eye, and often without a solitary thought beyond that. Real interest by a class is manifested in the recitation, of course, and the keen observer cannot fail to detect it; the bright eye, the earnest look, the serious and thoughtful question, and attentive listening, are indications; the desire to know, more than the desire to shine; the desire to tell when there is something really worth telling, rather than the desire to be heard. But the best criterion of the real power of the teacher to stimulate interest is found in that portion of the class not reciting.

(Of course it is taken for granted that the class is divided into sections.) The kind of zeal which controls the children at their seats in the pursuit of further knowledge is a good test of the teacher's power. If the children are studying in such a way as to get the most out of the subject, not simply committing to memory answers to questions so as to be able to recite and get a mark; if they are inquisitive and are consulting books of reference — are really pursuing their subjects — it speaks well for the teacher. And especially if the subject-matter of the class-room becomes the topic of conversation after school and at intermissions, not flippant or slighting, but in earnest inquiry, it speaks well for the teacher. And if the pupils, after promotion, carry into the class above interest in one or more subjects and a superior knowledge of these subjects, with a desire to pursue them further, this, perhaps, best of all, shows that the teacher has been successful in stimulating the right kind of interest.

If, on the other hand, there is a lack of devotion to the ends of the school, if the children are idle and listless and frittering away their time, it is a bad sign. If they are struggling eagerly and fiercely for marks, and holding the

teacher to the categorical question and answer, which makes it possible for them to be marked, this is almost as bad a sign as listlessness or inattention. The children who openly manifest their lack of interest in what is going on are pretty sure to find something that does interest them. The children who are studying for marks are interested, but in that which is a source of evil rather than of good.

Even with the youngest children there may be developed an interest in life itself, in the vital problems which must be met even by them, and if there is a tendency among the children to apply the teaching of the school to the problems out of school — to solve serious questions by means of the help which the school has furnished — that is perhaps the very highest proof of all that the right kind of teaching is done, and the right sort of interest created.

The second result named is the kind of knowledge that is fruitful or that may be used for apperceiving centers. If the pupils, after a recitation, possess a few facts which they regard as final, so that they think they have a thorough knowledge of the subject, the teaching has been bad. There is a very popular fetich known as "thoroughness" which means the picking out of a few facts, so unimportant and so limited that they can be known with approximate thoroughness by the inferior mind, and teaching these to the exclusion of the broader knowledge which reaches out into the world continually for more knowledge. If the pupils go to their seats satisfied with having answered all the questions, with no unanswered questions, with no desire to go on and tie new knowledge to the old, the teaching has been poor. If they go to their seats, not thinking much about what kind of a recitation has been made, but full of the subject

Considerations of Thoroughness.

and eager to know more of it, and disposed to attach all new things that come into the mind to the old as coördinate parts, then the teaching has been good. Good teaching relates all the parts and makes it possible for the children to see new relations between the new and the old. Any teaching which produces a sense of finality and completeness, or so-called "thoroughness," is hopelessly bad. Much better the teaching which closes up nothing but sets the tentacles of the mind all agog for new possessions, than that which closes up everything, the tentacles themselves included.

This sort of knowledge does not necessarily exclude certainty on minor points. It is possible to know the few inconsequential things just as well with good teaching as with poor, but with this difference: the result does not stop with the small attainment but goes on into a wider world and the mind continually enriches itself by the new things that it attaches to itself through their natural affinity for the old. It is only such knowledge that is really worth while, — the knowledge that is never final but is always secondary; that continually enlarges desire for more knowledge; that places the student in the attitude of Newton upon the seashore. All good teaching gives this, and the degree to which this sort of knowledge is imparted is one of the perfectly fair criteria by which the teacher may be judged.

Pursuit of Subject for Itself.

The third result of good teaching, that cannot be included in a category, is the ability to pursue study for its own end and beyond the limits of school requirements, with intensity, continuity, and success. This has been treated under other headings. It means the elimination of secondary ends, such as prizes, marks, and

punishments, from among the stimulants to study. It means also the reaching out for new knowledge, of which mention has already been made. It means, further, however, the power of concentration upon a subject, making pursuit for the time being an end in itself, and shutting out all extraneous and disturbing matters. This power of hard study by the pupil alone and unaided, for the sake of the desired primary end, is one of the highest results of good teaching. It can almost never, if ever, be secured in a school where there is mass teaching, — that is, where the classes all recite together and all study together with the teacher ever at hand. But the child who can sit down in a schoolroom while a class is reciting an interesting lesson to the teacher, and be deaf and blind to all this and become so absorbed in his study that he pursues it earnestly without regard to anything else, has acquired a power which, under ordinary circumstances, presages success in life, and it can be the result, at least to a degree, of good teaching. Of course there are great differences in minds, and some minds never can concentrate closely, but all can improve under the régime of the school if the teacher is of the right sort, if the interests are in the right direction, and if the ends pursued are such as appeal to the children as worth while. And this is another high mark of good teaching.

Concentration.

These three results, while they are more tangible than the higher spiritual results of which I spoke at first, still are to a degree intangible and cannot be exactly recorded. It is not easy to mark teachers on the basis of these qualities by definite symbols, but the observant supervisor knows whether any or all of them are possessed by the teachers and, within reasonable limits, to what degree, — that is, he can say with a fair degree of

Best Results Intangible.

confidence whether, so far as schoolroom achievement is concerned, Miss Smith or Miss Jones ought to be appointed to a principalship, both having the proper license. As to estimating the ability of teachers to do work which they have not yet done, as for example, to exercise the functions of principal, that again is a matter of judgment and of inference to be drawn from all the various points which have been discussed, and many which have not been mentioned.

So that in conclusion we come back again to the assertion that no code of rules, civil service or other, can, with any exactness or precision, or by any formal system of marking whatever, determine those finer points of excellence in teaching which really make one teacher more desirable than another. These can be determined only by observation in contact with teachers by critics possessed of sound sense and fairness, and it is necessary that school systems rely upon the possession of these qualities by the supervising force, otherwise the whole system becomes mechanical and lifeless. Records of observations should be kept by those observing, as carefully as possible, but no attempt should be made at exact mathematical rating. There is no measure for the spirit nor for spiritual work. The principles of promotion by examination alone as applied to teachers are fraught with error and with evil of all kinds. They have in some places been introduced as a substitute for the political patronage which sometimes creeps into schools, and they have done some good in this respect, but they can never be the final criteria as to the power of the teachers. They can never serve as a proper sole basis for the promotion of teachers. While their introduction as such a basis

Teachers Cannot be Judged by a Marking System.

may, in some cases, remove political influence, it brings with it greater evils, because even under a bad political system personal judgment has weight and excellence does to a degree tell. Under a mechanical system excellence of the highest sort does not tell; it rather stands in the way, and the mechanical virtues which can be rated are inevitably placed above the spiritual virtues which are beyond computation.

CHAPTER XVI

The School Superintendent

Thus far the school superintendent has been taken for granted. His various functions and necessary qualifications have been referred to from time to time and opinions have been expressed regarding some of them. It now seems time to treat of the school superintendent fully and connectedly.

The Superintendent a Newcomer.

It is to be remembered in all discussions regarding this official and his work that he is a recent comer into the field of education; that public sentiment regarding him is yet in a state of flux and that his office is still in the process of evolution. There is still very much of experimentation, with the widest variety of duties, and there are wide differences of opinion and practice regarding him and his place, all of which indicate his newness and his evolutionary state.

The position of the principal is a comparatively settled one, as is also the position of the school board. Whatever of uncertainty and change is found in relation to their functions grows out of a reciprocal change in regard to the superintendent. Gradually, as he evolves, he is modifying the power, the position, and the work of the older functionaries.

Product of Condensed Civilization.

The school superintendent is, in the first instance, the product of a civilization which is rapidly becoming condensed, congested, and urbanized. He is simply a type of the condensation and unification and differentiation of function that are going on in the whole business world.

As, strictly speaking, we have no national system of education and no head with authority, and, even in our States, for the most part, heads with very limited authority, the position of the superintendent of schools in any community is a local affair and due to local conditions, except as these are modified by the diffusion of knowledge and by the influence of the general movement which is sweeping not only the land but the civilized world. These general influences, however, are not yet of sufficient potency to produce very close resemblances in the functions of superintendents of schools in cities and rural communities having widely diverse origins and ideals.

Offices Differ Widely in Different Communities.

The superintendent of schools of Boston is a very different official from the one bearing the same name in New York. The former has little more than clerical duties to perform, except a few which are on paper and given him by the board of education. They are not statutory duties. The latter, on the other hand, is a statutory official possessed of very great power. He is in no sense the clerk of the board of education, and only in a very few senses its servant. The superintendent of schools in several cities in Ohio, until the recent upheaval, has been in many respects an autocrat, with functions quite different from those of the board of education, and in few senses subordinate to them.

These are instances of wide divergence, due to different historical development, and indicate how difficult it is to generalize regarding the ideal characteristics of a school superintendent. It takes a man of one type to be a successful subservient clerk and confidential adviser of the board of education, which arrogates to itself, or has inherited, all legislative and executive functions relating to the admin-

istration of the schools; it takes a man of a very different type to exercise the authority imposed by law of appointing teachers, determining courses of study, and, in general, directing the school system. In some instances the superintendents who have been quite successful in the former capacity have not succeeded very well when by a change in method of administration new powers have been conferred upon them.

Uniformity Undesirable.

Nor is it desirable to have uniform laws throughout the country, giving superintendents of schools the same powers and duties in all places. Local conditions are of great importance and no *ex cathedra* law, that is out of harmony with them, can succeed. To attempt to put in force in Boston, for instance, a law such as that which has prevailed in Cleveland would doubtless result in endless bickering and wrangling, if not in complete failure. Boston people are accustomed to rely upon the school committee to run their schools, and would rather have them do it badly than to have an autocratic superintendent do it well.

Certain Recognized Functions.

Notwithstanding all this there are certain general characteristics that belong almost of necessity to the successful school superintendent in any locality, and there is a sufficient agreement upon certain fundamentals to make it possible to speak of school superintendents generically. Many of the extreme views held in certain places, by certain radical reformers, have been materially modified and are likely to be more so, and, on the other hand, the very conservative views held by some of the older communities will also be modified by the passage of time and by contact with a moving world. But the time will never come, we should confidently hope, when a school superintendent's duties and powers will not vary with the

community, and the best superintendent will be the one who fits local conditions and, if he moves from place to place, is able to adapt himself to the circumstances growing out of new environment.

With this introduction let us consider as well as we may the school superintendent. As has been said, he is the result of very recent development. At first he was not supposed to have technical skill. His office was largely clerical. As communities grew and schools increased in number it became necessary to have some connecting link which, for clerical and official purposes, should preserve a sort of unity. The schoolmasters were the educational experts who were supposed to run the schools. The school board was the general directing agency, and the additional official came into office simply to represent the board.

VARIOUS FORMS AND STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

In some parts of the country the office has not yet advanced beyond this rudimentary stage. In some cities there are still superintendents who are minor functionaries; in some cases appointed by the board of education, and in some cases elected by the people, with no educational function whatever. Twenty years ago, and even much more recently, there were many such. I recall an experience years ago in a city where the superintendent of schools was a small local politician, elected to the office by the people, and paid, if my memory serves me rightly, the munificent sum of two hundred dollars a year. He was supposed to keep the records and distribute report blanks. This particular incumbent magnified his office and occasionally held teachers' meetings at which the report blanks were discussed. The principals were literally the

Examples of Variation.

heads of their schools. The high school principal was the chief educational official and performed some of the duties that the school superintendent now performs. If I am not mistaken, this rule still prevails in that city.

In other cities, as in Philadelphia, the school superintendent has been evolved into the educational adviser, practically without executive functions. In still others he is the executive officer of the board with considerable power, which varies according to his executive ability, his capacity to hold authority, and the willingness of the board of education to part with some of its legal powers. Even in such an uncertain state a strong superintendent will pretty nearly dominate the school system of which he is the head; will select teachers for appointment; will prepare and direct courses of study; and will be reckoned upon by the board of education as a factor in anything that they may do, and this even with a board of strong political tendencies. In the same system a weak superintendent will have no authority in regard to anything. That is, it is a matter of personal force and not of statutory powers and functions.

In other cities, as has been said, the evolution has gone so far that possibly a reversion of type will be necessary. That is, the superintendent has acquired pretty nearly autocratic powers. He is not merely the executive adviser of the board, but is vested with certain legislative functions. This was rather too much the case in the late Ohio law, and the new laws are distinctly reactionary though possibly not too much so.

VIEWED GENERICALLY

But out of all this uncertainty and lack of uniformity, a few truths are beginning to emerge clearly and definitely.

The school superintendent is becoming an expert. He is coming to be recognized the country over as a man who has made a thorough study of certain educational problems and is more familiar with them than other people are. When a vacancy occurs in the superintendency of a city, it is becoming yearly more and more common to go outside to find a man who has had training as a superintendent in some other city. Occasionally the cry is still raised that home talent is good enough, and untrained men are put into the office and receive their training there, but this is disappearing. Our better and higher professional schools are offering courses of training designed especially for those who intend to undertake the work of supervision, and the normal step is coming to be from the position of school principal to that of school supervisor or superintendent in a small town, where the functions are little different from those of the principal of a single school, and from that to the superintendency of a larger town, until the very large ones are reached.

Superintendent Becoming an Expert.

Sometimes the door of approach is from a county superintendency, but the important point is that the superintendent is more and more recognized as an expert. This is not less so in those places in which he is merely the official adviser of the board, than in those in which he is the real executive head of the school system.

There are two general classes of work in which the superintendent is supposed to excel and in which his power is growing. They are the *selection of teachers* and the *direction of teaching*. There are very few cities having a school superintendent in which he has not at least some voice in both of these matters. Sometimes the voice is very small and ineffective, but he is

Two Recognized Functions.

expected to have something to say about the selection of teachers and something to say about the character of the work done in schools. He is no longer, except in a very few instances, merely a clerical assistant.

As to the former of these duties — the selection of teachers — his powers vary from the vaguest, most indefinite advice to the board and the endorsement of the board's action, through the grades of licensing and nominating to that of actual undisputed appointment, and opinions differ widely as to where in this scale he should properly stand.

In regard to the direction of work, there is also a scale, but there is less uncertainty than with regard to the appointment of teachers. There are very few systems in which the superintendent does not prepare the course of study, at least for the approval of the board of education, and, when the course has been adopted, does not supervise its administration. Sometimes, it is true, this supervision has very little effect because the superintendent is unable to take remedial measures if the teachers do not obey his instructions; but even this is rapidly passing.

We must consider what power it is really best to have bestowed upon superintendents of schools under average conditions, with regard to these two general functions.

ONE-MAN POWER

First, as to the appointment and disciplining of teachers: Is the one-man power about which we hear so much in these days advisable? If not, how much power should the superintendent have? The idea of making the superintendent practically absolute over the body of teachers had at one time very many advocates, especially among superintendents themselves and radical reformers. The criticisms

upon such laws as those prevailing at that time in Cleveland and other Ohio cities was not that the superintendent was too absolute, but that he was not sufficiently protected in his own office. That is, while he was practically absolute with regard to the appointment of teachers, it was felt that his own position might be endangered through the enmity aroused, and undoubtedly that feature of the laws was inconsistent with the general scheme.

It is quite evident to students of public opinion that the idea of the one-man power is passing, and I am convinced that in the future in the average city, while the superintendent will be an important official with much power, he will be subject to certain checks from the representatives of the people, which will safeguard both him and the schools.

Work of Schools and Business Organization.

The advocates of the granting of absolute power to the superintendent point to great business concerns with their authoritative executive officers who can appoint or dismiss employees at pleasure. They forget that while the public school system is a great business, it is more — it is a public institution, part of the governmental machinery, not the agent of a few people working for their own advantage, but the representative of all the people. They forget further that the results of the school administration are not so tangible as those of a business organization, as a railroad or factory; that they cannot be adjudged by the examination of a set of books, but that they are metaphysical, remote, and difficult to prove; that often the best judges are the heads of families to which the children belong, who are consequently in daily touch with the children. Schools must give pupils the kind of training that the average citizen wants for his children, and not that which

an administrative officer, however expert, may think best for them. In the long run, better schools and a wiser educational system will grow out of the demands of the people than can be secured by the ablest educational expert working alone. An emperor is not a good type for a school superintendent. It is not good for any man to have absolute power, nor is it good for any institution, small or large, to be under the absolute domination of a single will. Particularly is this true of an institution like a school system, which depends for its excellence upon the intelligent cooperation and sympathetic work of a large number of people.

The teachers in a school system cannot be treated as "hands," without imperiling the work of the schools. The work of the teachers is spiritual work, and no teacher teaching under the absolute domination of another's will can do his best work. Nor is it good for the superintendent himself to be absolute. For the average superintendent it is not safe. He is likely to wreck himself in a very short time.

OFFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Superintendent should have Nominating Power.

The relation of the superintendent of schools to the appointment of the teaching force should be somewhat like that of the President of the United States to the appointment of postmasters. It should not be possible for a board of education to appoint a teacher without the approval of the superintendent, nor should the superintendent be able to appoint a teacher without the approval of the board of education. This gives the superintendent all the power he needs, because no one individual is essential to a school system, and commonly if there is strong objection on the part of the board to any individual there is good reason for it, and

the superintendent is better off as a superintendent with some one else in place of the objectionable teacher.

Moreover, to a very large extent the success of a system depends upon public support. The board of education represents the people; an appointment made by the superintendent and confirmed by the board, to a degree divides the responsibility. The superintendent is primarily responsible, but the board of education is also responsible to the people. Its individual members cannot shirk such responsibility. If improper teachers are appointed and confirmed by them, the superintendent, of course, will merit the first blame and will get it; but the members of the board of education cannot join the issue against the superintendent, — they are likewise responsible. This is a source of great strength to the superintendent.

Board should Share Responsibility.

As to the discipline of teachers, the superintendent should have the power of suspension, but not of final removal. The board of education should again share the responsibility, and the teacher should be allowed to continue unless the board can be brought to approve of the suspension. A wise superintendent wants all the strength, all the support, that he can get, and, in general, it is safe to say that if he is unable to convince an ordinary board of education of the justice of his action he is probably wrong, though of course not necessarily. Surely, if he cannot convince the board, over whom, if he is the right kind of man, he will almost certainly have an influence, he cannot convince the public.

The same general principles apply to the adoption of a course of study. It is absolutely necessary that the people through their representatives approve a course of study

if it is to accomplish the best results, and if the superintendent is unable to persuade a board of education that his course of study is a good one, it probably is not altogether good. At least he can afford to be patient and to wait, but his time need not be wasted. It may be employed in educating the public and the board up to his own advanced ideas.

POWER OF INITIATIVE

Power of Initiative All that is Needed.

A superintendent who has the power of initiative in all important matters, such as the appointment of teachers and the making of the course of study, but whose actions must be confirmed by the board of education, has all the power he needs and all that is good for him. If he is the right man for the place he can practically dominate the situation. If he cannot dominate the situation, cannot secure sufficient influence with the board of education to induce them to follow his leadership, he is not the man for the place. In general, a good and strong superintendent will have his way even under a bad system and a bad board, and the weak superintendent will not have his way even if his power is absolute; he will be dominated by somebody, if not by the school board, by commercial influences, social influences, church influences, or political influences. No system can be devised which will make a strong superintendent or a successful one out of a weak one, and the good superintendent ought not to ask for more than the opportunity to initiate movements and advocate them before the board of education. With this, if he cannot succeed in persuading the board that he is right, the probability is that he is wrong.

STATUTORY EXECUTIVE POWERS AND DUTIES

But when all is said it remains that the superintendent of schools, whether in city or country, should be an official with very considerable statutory powers. The character of his office, the duties that devolve upon him, and the responsibility that he is to carry, should be fixed by law and not left to the whim or prejudice of changing boards of education, and, as I have said, they should be very considerable indeed. He should be in reality, as in name, the executive officer of the educational system, carrying out the mandates of the board of education, who act as the people's representatives and who are the proper legislative officers, and having certain specific powers with which even the board cannot interfere.

Certain Powers should be Statutory.

Among these powers should be, first, that of nominating all subordinates in the school system — supervisors, principals, and all classes of teachers. This should be absolute. It should be impossible for a board to appoint any teacher or any one connected with the school system on the educational side unless such person has been nominated by the superintendent. If the board fail to confirm any nomination of the superintendent, then it should be his duty to make another.

He should also have power to transfer all teachers for the good of the service provided such transfer does not involve degradation as to position or reduction of salary. If a teacher has been suspended, the approval or disapproval of the suspension should rest with the board of education.

It should be a statutory duty of the superintendent of schools to prepare a course of study and administer it.

Such a course, however, should require the approval of the board of education before final adoption. Once adopted, it should rest with the superintendent to interpret it and to see that it is carried out by the teachers. This should include authority to call teachers together and to give them definite instruction to that end.

In the matter of licensing teachers, the superintendent should have a voice, but should not be the sole licensing authority. If there is a special licensing board he should be a member of it.

These are the essential statutory powers of the superintendent of schools everywhere. What more he should make of his office is a matter for further discussion. The strong superintendent exerts a vast influence, not only upon the schools, but upon the community, far beyond the statutory definitions of his functions.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT (Continued)

EVEN in the present rudimentary stage of the school superintendent he is much more than a statutory officer, and if there is no change in the trend of the development, he will come to be in his community a social factor of the first importance.

The people of a municipality elect a comptroller, and every citizen knows, or can know, just what the comptroller's business is and how well he fulfils his various functions, because they are clear and definite and very little affected by his personality. He may be agreeable, or disagreeable; he may be personally influential, or personally insignificant; but if he is a good bookkeeper and honest, and reasonably intelligent, he may be a good comptroller, and no duties calling for the possession of higher qualifications ordinarily rest upon him. That is true of most public functionaries. The question of personality is merely a question which affects their own relations with other people and their own welfare. It is not an important element, except politically, in the performance of their various public duties. This is not quite so true of the mayor of a city as it is of the comptroller, but even in his case personality is of minor importance. In members of boards, such as common council, board of estimate and apportionment, and school board, it is of comparatively little consequence what the men

are personally, if they perform honestly, intelligently, and efficiently the prescribed duties.

With the school superintendent quite the contrary is true. His statutory duties are in many respects the least important of those that rest upon him. Many a school superintendent is honest and reasonably intelligent and able to perform efficiently the duties required of him by statute, and yet is a complete failure as a school superintendent.

Varied Relations of the Superintendent.

The good school superintendent of necessity enters into somewhat close personal relations with many people — with the board of education; with the body of teachers; with some of the children; and with large numbers of the parents. And these relations are of the utmost importance. The manner in which he establishes and maintains them and the character he gives them will determine almost wholly his success as a school superintendent, at least in the higher sense. A superintendent may be able to write valuable reports for the edification of the public; he may be able to make good recommendations, and force them through the board of education; he may be able to formulate a good course of study, and excellent rules for the governing of teachers; but unless he can establish the right personal relations with these different people he will be surprised at the slight effect of his various activities.

This point is emphasized to such an extent, because it is too commonly overlooked. Especially in discussions of school reforms, we are disposed to place relatively undue emphasis upon the right law and the proper statutory conditions. Not that these latter are unimportant; indeed they are of great consequence, as is shown in the preceding chapter. But they are mere conditions. The school

superintendent's success depends upon other foundations. His functions are vastly higher than can be indicated by any statutes, and his usefulness is determined by the exercise of powers that cannot be indicated in any law or code of regulations. Possibly it is this fact which has led some very astute observers, for example, Dr. J. M. Rice, the editor of *The Forum*, to the belief that the right political conditions for the government of schools are of comparatively little consequence, because some school superintendents have succeeded in making good schools under the worst political conditions, and the very best political conditions do not necessarily bring good schools. In the large city and in the small alike the excellence of the schools will depend chiefly upon the success of the school superintendent in obeying the unwritten law, and in meeting those conditions that are personal and that cannot be set down in any ordinance.

It is difficult to state which of the classes of relations mentioned is of the greatest importance, so without attempting to decide this question let us consider first the relations, personal and otherwise, of the school superintendent with the school board.

In most cities the superintendent receives his appointment from the school board. This of itself makes it necessary, if he desires to retain his place and secure re-election at the expiration of his term, that he maintain harmonious relations with the board; but this is the least worthy motive for maintaining such relations.

Theoretically, the superintendent is the employee, and, in many matters, the executive of the board; and as has been pointed out in the preceding chapter, the power conferred upon him varies greatly. But whatever the degree of

responsibility given the superintendent, the character of his relation to the board is reasonably uniform.

In a few large cities in which the superintendent has great statutory power he can succeed in accomplishing much by a vigorous exercise of his power, if his relations with the board are inharmonious, or even positively antagonistic; but he cannot accomplish as much as he can if the relations are harmonious, even in those cases in which he has the very greatest statutory authority.

It must be borne in mind that the results which the superintendent seeks to produce in his work are spiritual results.

Results Sought Spiritual.

It is one thing to have regulations passed, courses of study adopted and printed, and even formally put into execution. It is quite another thing to secure in the schools the spiritual result which only is education.

Board Represents the People.

A school board, whether large or small, whether wise or unwise, whether honest or corrupt, is composed of citizens representing with more or less accuracy the whole body. Its members are of necessity people of consequence and influence among some classes of the community, otherwise they never could have secured the positions accorded them. If they are personally, as well as officially, in harmony with the school superintendent and believe heartily in the various things that he is doing, or trying to do, in the schools, the support which they can give extra-officially is very great, greater than most superintendents are willing to admit. Particularly in those cities in which the statutory powers of the superintendent are limited and the school board is the legal seat of all, or nearly all, authority, the harmonious relations of the superintendent and board are essential to the carrying out of even the smallest wishes of the superintendent.

I do not know of an instance of a superintendent getting done in the schools the work that he wants done while his relations with the school board are for a considerable time inharmonious. Of course it happens to nearly every superintendent to be occasionally and for brief periods at outs with his board, but unless he can ultimately bring them to his way of thinking and make them his supporters, he can accomplish little.

Relations should be Harmonious.

Now, how is a superintendent to maintain harmonious relations with a board, composed partly of cranks, partly of dishonest men, partly of self-seeking politicians, partly of good, well-intentioned obstinate ones, and partly of really good members?

The question cannot be answered in a sentence. There is no specific for the case, but it is safe to say that it is not necessary to sacrifice principle in order to secure such harmony. It is necessary sometimes to wait. A superintendent should be patient, and if a good thing that he has in mind cannot be secured at once, he should not lose his temper or denounce the board of education or the unthinking public. His business is to educate, not merely the children, but the whole public. Indeed, that is his greatest, highest, and noblest function. If his point of view is reasonably sound, and if he is wise and patient, he can almost always bring at least the board of education to support him.

Should be Patient. Must Educate the Public.

The trouble with many superintendents is that, like many other good people who desire to see good things done in the world, they are pugnacious and narrow, and unable to take any other point of view than the one which comes to them most easily. Many a good man loses his chance to do good

by standing up and declaring too loudly that he is good and implying that other people are bad.

The superintendent who desires to exert influence in the community does not need to be a compromiser, but he does need to bear in mind that no one is wholly bad; that most of the people with whom he has to deal are reasonably self-respecting and honest people whose motives are possibly as good as his own, and that even if this is not true, they at least have some good motives and are capable of being appealed to through them.

If the members of the board are ignorant, as a rule they are highly complimented if they are taken into the confidence of the superintendent and are put into a position to support a new, broad, and highly intellectual policy.

Must Consult Members of Board.

The superintendent who desires to maintain the support of his board for progressive work, must take the time and pains to talk personally and privately with its members; with the leaders, of course, but with others as well. Many a good project fails because the superintendent has thrown it at his board in a formal report in terms which often its members do not understand and has startled them into opposition; whereas, if he had quietly sat down with a few of the influential men, and sometimes with those not so influential, and explained his project and made them think that they would be responsible for doing a good thing if they supported it, he could have secured his end.

The superintendent should treat the members of the board of education as men worthy of respect, at least for the position they hold, and should not make them feel too decidedly his own superiority. Yet a superintendent makes a grave mistake who lowers himself, especially morally, in order

to be in touch with the influential members of his board. The comparatively ignorant and commonplace citizen, who happens to be a school board member, likes to look up to his superintendent. He likes to feel that he is on good terms with him, but, at the same time, it is a matter of pride for him to be able to say, "Our superintendent is a superior man"; and the superintendent who lowers himself in moral or intellectual tone for the sake of keeping in sympathy with such men is likely to lose more than he will gain. That is, the members of a school board want to feel that the superintendent is a superior man, but they do not want to feel that he feels himself a superior. It is a higher compliment for him to seek to treat them as upon his level than for him to lower himself to their level. This is a maxim which might well be followed by many men who are not school superintendents but who desire to influence others.

Must not Lower Himself.

In case members of the board desire the superintendent to make a nomination or recommendation which he cannot conscientiously make, he does not need to assume that their motives are wrong, and that they are dishonest people, trying to lead him into iniquity. He does not need to rise in his might and square off for battle. It is entirely possible in most cases to decline to make an improper recommendation or nomination without antagonizing the one who asks it. This should be done by appealing to the higher nature of the member of the board and putting the responsibility and the onus upon him. Politicians, as a rule, respect men who have convictions and who are ready to stand for them, and yielding to an improper suggestion does not win friends, even when it is done for that purpose. But in refusing to yield it is not necessary

Must be Firm but Courteous.

to knock down the people who have made the suggestions. So much for the personal relations of the superintendent with his board.

Officially, he should never lose his grip. He should never let the board feel that he is not to be reckoned with in regard to any proposition affecting the education of the children, and yet he should let the members feel that they are people of consequence, and that they are as deeply interested in the cause of education as he is and are doing something for it. A tactful superintendent will frequently make a suggestion to a member of the board in such a way that he himself will propose the very reform that the superintendent seeks. Superintendents often err in their desire to have it evident that all the reforms and all the good movements spring from them. It is sometimes better to have them apparently spring from the board itself. It is often wise for the superintendent to fall in sweetly with the suggestion of a member of the board and say nothing about the fact that the suggestion was his originally.

Should be Tactful.

The superintendent should treat with respect every suggestion from members of the board, and if he cannot agree with them, he should be at infinite pains to make his reasons plain, and to convince them that the suggestions are not feasible. Sometimes it is best to yield in minor matters, even if the measures proposed are contrary to his judgment, in order to hold control in major matters.

That superintendent has done well in managing his board to whom the members will come for advice and suggestion before bringing a project forward in meeting. That is the ideal relation — that of friend and counsellor, as well as executive of the board. The members should feel that the board, as an official body, is responsible to the people, and

the superintendent should do all in his power to stimulate that feeling instead of seeking to make them feel that they are responsible for nothing and that he is responsible for everything.

From this it follows that almost the first duty of every superintendent is to educate his board. He should begin this and persist systematically. The persistence is particularly important, inasmuch as the membership of school boards is constantly changing, and the superintendent who has a well-educated board to-day, may find himself with an awkward team to-morrow, and sometimes with a vicious one. He should educate the board, first of all, to faith in himself. It is this faith in him as a man that will make it possible for him to accomplish his ends with the least friction and with the greatest certainty.

Must Educate the Board.

This means that he should always be thoroughly honest. No matter though the members of a board be corrupt, a superintendent cannot afford to be dishonest with them. He must be tactful and diplomatic, but not crooked. They must come to feel after acquaintance with him that he is wholly sincere in all the measures he brings forward; that he has only the good of the schools at heart; and that when he makes a recommendation they need not look for any ulterior motive. That is the first step.

Must be Honest.

The second is to convince them that the recommendations are in the main wise, backed by sound educational doctrine, and likely to result in good. If the superintendent can keep his board in such an attitude, he has before him a clear field, but he should not rest contented with this. He should seek to make his board intelligent, at least as to the superficial aspects of educational doctrine. He should keep them constantly informed of what he is about to do

and his reasons for it; they will like it, and he will find his strongest support coming from the members of the board that he has thus instructed.

These points of advice may seem unnecessary, but they are not. More superintendents fail because they have not taken the board of education into their confidence and have not inspired the confidence of its members than from almost any other reason. This is quite true of some of the stronger and abler superintendents who do not get along well with their boards. Sometimes the loss of his position by a really able superintendent may be traced to a lack of tact on his part in failing to educate the board into a condition of confidence in him, and many inferior superintendents who have not the confidence of intelligent teachers or of their confrères, are strong in their positions because they have trained their boards to support them.

Should Pave the Way for New Measures.

Another suggestion with regard to the official relations of the superintendent towards his board is this: He should not present to his board new measures or schemes until he has them very clearly worked out in his own mind, except that it is sometimes well to suggest in confidence to an intelligent board member a possibility or a dream of something to be done at some future time. But when a superintendent goes before his board with a statement of what he wants, he should know to the utmost detail what that want is, and he should be able to defend his proposition accurately and minutely against opposition from the board or from other sources. Loose recommendations soon forfeit the superintendent's position of strength. This is equally true whether they relate to financial matters, to the course of study, or to the appointment of teachers.

While the personality of the superintendent is a matter of such consequence, do not let me be understood as advocating reliance upon that alone. If there are no statutes controlling the appointment of teachers, for instance, a wise superintendent will secure from the board of education formal regulations upon these matters at the earliest possible moment. He needs these for his own protection. It is always a source of strength for him to be able to say to his board whenever an improper suggestion is made, "If you do that you will violate your own rules." While the superintendent should formulate the rules, he should have the board adopt them as their own. I knew a school system to be practically revolutionized by a tactful superintendent, who simply secured the adoption of stringent regulations during the early days of his superintendency. These rules the board could not consistently violate, even though they interfered with the assumed prerogative of its members in securing the appointment of teachers.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Superintendent and the Teachers

In the preceding chapter the extra-official relations of the superintendent with his board were treated at some length. He has other relations not nominated in the bond, with other people, which are no less important than those with the board. Indeed, I trust that it has been made clear that these extra-official relations are of very great consequence, and that their character often determines the success or failure of the superintendent. The school superintendent who manages his schools from his office, no matter how well organized his office may be, and who expects to secure educational results by giving orders, even though these orders be practically perfect in wisdom and in manner, is doomed to disappointment.

When we attain the ideal school system, we shall have Doctor Tompkins's definition of a school, viz., "a spiritual relation," expanded to include the whole system. For if we admit that the ultimate purpose of school organization is the spiritual growth of the young, and it is to be brought about by means of a personal relation between the teacher and the pupil, we must, in logic, admit that if there are other people directly concerned in the cause of education, as, for instance, in guiding and instructing the teachers themselves, those other persons must enter into similar relations with the teachers. The psychological reasons for such

relations with members of the board have already been considered, and we shall later consider the sociological reasons for such relations with other people.

Now as to the superintendent and the teachers: It is evident that the character of the superintendent's relations with his teachers must vary largely with the community, especially with its size. In a small city, with only a few schools, the superintendent can know personally every teacher and can establish relations with them all, resembling the proper relations between the teacher and his pupils, such as shall bring about the kind of teaching that he wants in the true way, which is the way of sympathy and harmony.

Relations will Vary with Size of Community.

In cities of larger size the relations must necessarily be different. In a city of the intermediate class, from 100,000 to 300,000 in population, the superintendent can know most, or all, of his teachers by name and face, and a few of them personally quite well, and that is practically the limit of possibility. In the larger cities, those of more than 300,000, the superintendent cannot know many of his teachers at all personally, and in the very largest cities, such as New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, he cannot know in any satisfactory way even all of his principals. And yet I am convinced that the sort of personal relations of which I have spoken, and which I deem essential to the best administration of schools, may be maintained by the supervising force in any city, no matter how many millions of people its inhabitants are.

So let us consider first the character of these relations, and let it be assumed that if the city is too large for the superintendent himself to maintain them, they will be maintained by some other representative of the Department of

Supervision, and that although the superintendent's personal relations are with an increasingly limited number of teachers, they will be in every case with those who themselves must influence others.

It must be evident to all readers that we now are considering the subtler, more spiritual and higher functions of the supervising force, and not especially the judicial and executive functions, though there is no necessary conflict between the two. If the superintendent holds himself so aloof from his body politic, particularly from that portion with which it is possible for him to be in immediate, personal contact, in order that he may be an unfeeling and unbiased judge, he will fail of the very end he has in mind, and he will have exalted into a position of supreme importance that function which is not properly supreme.

It is true that the superintendent must perform in an absolutely impartial way his judicial and executive duties, but these, important as they are, are not his chief duties. I am aware that some superintendents will not agree with me at this point, but my primary contention must be kept in mind — that teaching is a spiritual process; that only those teach well who are in spiritual *rapport* with the taught, and are employing both material and method which they believe will be spiritually effective.

Sympathetic Relations with Teachers Necessary.

A forced and driven corps of teachers, whether yielding mechanically, or whether cherishing in their hearts rebellion, will make a failure of the most philosophical, complete, and wise course of study. It is said of the teachers of one of our greatest cities that they employ their time chiefly in efforts to evade the requirements of the course of study, and yet the administration of this city is strong, vigorous, and relentless,

wholly, and it almost appears of intention, unsympathetic. The evil of such a state of things is evident. Teachers, not only not believing heartily in what they are doing and not understanding the underlying principles and purpose of it all, but actually antagonistic and seeking how best not to do it and at the same time keep out of trouble, cannot teach well. The work is sure to be badly done, and the course of study will fail to justify itself in the minds of those who are observing it, not because it is bad, but because it is badly administered, and this in spite of the fact that the administrative department is wonderfully strong and able.

What is needed in that and in other cities where like conditions prevail? Two things. The first is official and includes careful, persistent, and patient instruction in the educational principles underlying the course of study, in the course itself as exemplifying these principles, and in the methods of carrying it out so as to produce the best results. The second is extra-official and personal.

Teachers, like other people, are controlled by their feelings more than by their judgment. It would certainly be ungracious to say that this may be partly due to the fact that the great majority of them are women, and I am not sure that that has anything to do with the case. If it has, it is more than offset by the fact that women, as a rule, are more open-minded and more willing to accept new ideas than men are. And when their faith is aroused and they begin to work *con amore*, nothing is too difficult for them, neither effort of preparation, nor effort of execution.

More sincere approval of the course of study and of the efforts of the administration to improve the schools in any city will be brought about if the superintendent will enter

into agreeable personal relations with the leading spirits, and create in their minds personal faith in himself and a fair degree of personal liking, than by all the lectures and classes for instruction that can possibly be conducted; and as a result of this, vastly better work will be done everywhere.

The Importance of Pleasant Personal Relations.

It is to be borne in mind, too, as has been said repeatedly, that the wisdom is not all with the superintendent; that teachers are at least reasonable beings; that many of them know quite as much of the principles of education as the superintendent, and some of them probably more; and in any case that often the superintendent is himself a mere accident, selected from his fellows for causes that are not apparent except to the initiated. But even if he is superior intellectually and professionally to the body of teachers, that fact will not be made manifest by any degree of aloofness, but rather by close personal relations. If he is not so superior, his aloofness will simply bring him into dislike and possible ridicule. I have known of more than one instance of teachers and principals who were not convinced of the wisdom of the plans of the superintendent, but were willing to undertake to carry them out sincerely and open-mindedly, simply because of their personal respect and liking for him and their desire to please, and in all of these cases they were ultimately converted to his way of thinking, because they had worked with open minds. Whereas, if their personal attitude toward the superintendent had been other than it was, their attitude of mind toward the work they were doing would have been so totally different as to make it impossible for them to see the new light.

Aloofness not a Proof of Dignity.

Doubtless there is need of caution, and in instances there is danger in close personal relations between the superintend-

ent and his subordinates, but that is almost invariably due to some weakness on his part — either weakness of judgment or weakness of character. Familiarity breeds contempt only with the contemptible; it breeds respect with those worthy of it. The real leader is manifest in a throng, and he does not need a dais, a throne, and a robe to make his leadership manifest. But let us consider some of the cautions that are evidently needed.

The Official Superior should not be Indebted to His Subordinates.

The personal relations never should become a weak leaning of the higher upon the lower. The official should always maintain such an attitude that he can discipline when necessary. In other words, the harmony should not rest upon favors sought from or bestowed by subordinates. The superintendent who at election time has sought the aid of his subordinates to secure his own election, or who has called them in to help him out of some tight political place, has weakened his power to discipline those whom he has thus called upon, and it is quite likely that they will take advantage of the hold they thus have gained. The superintendent should be the recipient of whatever gratitude arises from favors done, as well as of the abuse which too commonly follows favors. Yet, in so far as is possible, the relation should be human and not official.

Special Intimacies should be Avoided.

The superintendent should be careful also not to have particular intimates among his subordinates to the exclusion of others. Naturally his personal relations will vary for personal reasons — that cannot be avoided; but no subordinate should feel that others have the superintendent's ear to his exclusion. All should feel that they can come to him and find a sympathetic listener, whether they wish to seek help, to

narrate incidents, or to give encouragement, or even advice. Above all things, the superintendent should avoid a "kitchen cabinet" and every form of clique. He must not enter into such relations with any small fraction of his subordinate force as to lead the others to think that they are discriminated against or regarded less highly, and he must be especially careful not to make more warmly welcome than others those who come to him with flattery and adulation. If the superintendent can enter into such personal relations with his subordinates that they can talk over a situation or a new plan with him frankly and fully, stating objections and difficulties as plainly as if the scheme were their own, he has accomplished much, and is in a position to accomplish much more.

Power of Harmony.

It is surprising how much of red tape, even, will be rendered unnecessary if people feel aright. Suppose every teacher in a city system should go into his school with the heartiest intellectual and spiritual belief in a broad and uplifting course of study, and carry it out with the utmost zeal and faith — the schools of that system would bound to the front with a speed unparalleled and undreamed of. Now such a state of things, of course, is not wholly possible, but it may be realized approximately, in small systems quite readily, and to a considerable degree even in the very largest, by extension of personal influence; by the recognition of the fact that teachers are, first of all, human beings of a good sort, who are, however, controlled more largely by their sympathies and their feelings than by their intellects; and by the further recognition of the fact that the best way to the control of the intellect is commonly through the emotions. With all this, the superintendent must appear even, strong, impartial, with ready

sympathy alike for all, having many likes, but very few or no apparent dislikes.

The lower reasons for this sort of thing are the same as apply in dealing with the school board. Material success is better secured through human sympathy than through force, but this lower motive is not the main motive. Teachers are worthy of this personal recognition; they are not "hands"; they are not parts of a machine; they are men and women of culture and character, for the most part, and should be treated with the warm, sympathetic confidence which will bring out the best that is in them.

This argument takes for granted that there is some one in the administrative force whose duty it is to help make teachers better. This involves not merely instruction, but inspiration and personal counsel. In a large system this important function falls to a variety of people whose duties are differentiated. The superintendent should be the personal inspiration, counselor, and guide of as large a group of people as it is possible for him to come into personal contact with; in very large cities, possibly no more than the associate and subordinate superintendents and supervisors. In most cities it is possible for him to hold such relations, at least with school principals. In the smaller cities, he can hold them with the school principals and some of the teachers, and in the quite small cities with all. But even in the larger cities the inspiration received from the superintendent should be extended downward.

In Large Cities the Influence should be Passed Along.

An inspirational force is absolutely necessary for the cultivation of *esprit de corps* and for the securing of the best kind of spiritual work in the schools. In the large cities the associate superintendents, district superintendents, or super-

visors — that is, the immediate subordinates of the superintendent of schools, by whatever name they may be called — should constitute such an inspirational force, and should exert their influence upon those within their field, ordinarily both teachers and principals — certainly upon principals. This function should be exercised before that of judge or disciplinarian.

We must never lose sight of the fact that the great business of the supervising force is to help the teachers teach, and not simply to pass upon them; that unless the supervising force makes it easier for the teachers to teach well, helps them, guides them, stimulates them, inspires them, it fails of its highest function. The young teacher, the discouraged teacher, the teacher who does not understand what the methods or the meanings of the course of study are, should have some one belonging to the administration in sympathy with its purpose and spirit to whom he can go and expose his difficulties with full confidence of friendly consideration and kindly help.

The Superintendent who does not Help Fails.

The superintendent who puts himself upon a pedestal, and allows the teachers to speak to him only with difficulty and at a respectful distance, loses his best chance of getting good work. If a teacher goes to the superintendent or the supervisor with anxious heart, but with hope, and comes away with a chilled spine and hopeless, the superintendent or supervisor, however much he may have impressed his visitor and himself with his own dignity and importance, has failed egregiously and disgracefully. It is not just praise to say of a superintendent that he has no friends among the teachers; it is the strongest condemnation. But if, on the other hand, the teacher has visited the supervisor

perhaps with trembling, and has gone away helped and encouraged, and feeling better able to undertake the work of the schoolroom than before, the supervisor has been so far wholly successful.

These relations do not need to be entirely professional; it should be possible for the teacher to converse with the superintendent without talking shop all the time — but they should be chiefly professional. The aim of the superintendent should be to make it possible to bring about through them a better professional condition. Above all things, the supervisor should never enter into the relation of gossip with his subordinates. Supervisors sometimes cause serious harm by going about from school to school and carrying bits of personal information which better had been forgotten. The supervisor or superintendent who is an itinerant purveyor of gossip is at least a nuisance, and should be summarily suppressed.

Supervising Officer should Never Gossip.

The visit of the superintendent or the supervisor should always be welcomed by the good teacher and by the ambitious teacher. It should be dreaded only by the teacher who has consciously done wrong, or neglected to do right.

Visits should be Welcome.

"The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of the kingdom." The political superintendent — the one who gets along without doing the best work — understands the value of this personal contact. Some of the very worst superintendents in the country have maintained their positions for a long time, and have been popular, because they have known how to make use of the personal equation. As Wesley said of music, "There is no reason why the devil

Political Strength in Personal Sympathy.

should have all the good," so we might say of methods of school administration. Those elements of strength which are recognized and employed with success by the bad should be considered, and, if not in themselves evil, employed by the good. Let no superintendent think that he will gain power by assuming superiority and holding aloof. He should be strong with his teachers and not apart from them, and if he is the right kind of man his influence will be greater and the good that he does will be vastly increased if he seeks to find the best in his associates, and puts himself into close and sympathetic personal relations with them.

CHAPTER XIX

Social Functions of the Superintendent

Before passing from the school superintendent, it seems worth while to consider briefly his social functions. This does not mean attendance upon afternoon teas, progressive euchre parties, or evening receptions, although these may be proper and even important gatherings for him to attend. But it refers to the superintendent as a factor in the community life — a prominent figure in all public movements and public gatherings which are influential in furthering the aims for which society is organized.

Theoretically, no man is in a better position to serve the public in such capacity than the school superintendent. He is the schoolmaster of his town epitomized. He represents in his own person, or should represent, the educational forces and the intellectual ideals of the community. The old trinity of intellectual influence in the community — the minister, the squire, and the doctor — was long ago enlarged by the addition of the schoolmaster, and he has been for years a growing figure, somewhat eclipsing the others.

Schoolmaster Represents Intellectual Forces.

The squire is but a ghost, and the lawyer, who has taken his place, is not because of his profession necessarily an influential figure. The doctor has in most cases ceased to try to be a public character. The minister still occasionally

tries to be, sometimes with disastrous effect to himself and his sacred cause.

Their places have been taken by the professional reformer, the man who is at the head of the Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Trade, or other semi-public body, and, in a way, the politician, especially as represented by the mayor. But no one of these can fill the place as well as can the schoolmaster. He is really, as represented by the superintendent, sole heir to the old intellectual forces which were such *per se*. If he uses his opportunity, if he makes even a feeble attempt to use it, he is sure to be awarded a chance to exert a wiser and more wholesome influence than any other single man in the community. His counsel will be sought, and when obtained will be valued, unless, by some foolish course, he lowers his own standard. The general tendency of the better element in every community is to look up to the superintendent of schools and to put him forward to the full measure of his ability, and often beyond it.

Now, in view of this change in attitude, and of the vast opportunity which it has given the school superintendent, what ought he to be as a public man aside from his work of superintending education?

Superintendent should Educate the Public.

He should educate the public in education. This does not mean simply that he should be a lecturer upon paideutics, though that is doubtless one of his proper and necessary offices, but it means that he should take within his sympathies and comprehension all organizations and plans that make for the intellectual and moral betterment of the community. That is, he should take a large view of education.

Technically, the superintendent's duties are limited to the management of the public schools, but we have not yet

arrived at a very clear notion of the limits of this management, or of what should be included within the purview and control of the public school authorities; but if we accept the common, limited view of their office, we must not accept this as defining the superintendent's field of activities. He should be the active coördinating force to bring into harmony and to unify, in so far as unity is desirable, all those agencies which are operated under the auspices of philanthropic and ecclesiastical bodies for the common education.

There is much waste in all communities, and, in general, a lack of coördination among well-meaning people who are working for the same ends, but not together.

What, then, should the school superintendent do beyond the actual supervision of schools?

First, what should he not do? He should not engage in any political strife, and that means more than partisan politics. He should not take sides upon questions that do not directly concern his educational work, even though he may be greatly interested in the outcome. There are many interests in which it is possible for the superintendent to mingle without stirring up strife, and all others he should eschew. It is true, a superintendent is a citizen and should exercise his rights as a citizen; should vote and do what else he can for the political cause in which he believes, but without taking an active or an offensive part. Let it be borne in mind that if he is to be a harmonizer and organizer of educational forces in the community, he must win the confidence of all parties and be on good terms with all. Most social, and very many political, controversies are wholly unnecessary, and are due to the inability of people to understand one another's views and to the unconscious belief that they have in their own inerrancy.

Should Avoid Partisanship.

These controversies unfortunately often occur in attempts to bring about moral and political reforms. These the school superintendent should keep out of. He should also keep out of religious controversies. Of course it is his privilege, as it is that of every man, to go to the church of his own faith and to work in it, but not to take part in controversies with people of other faiths or of no faith. He should never be partisan excepting on behalf of the best things in his own immediate, technical field, but he should be active, in so far as possible, in philanthropic, literary, and scientific organizations, and also in important social bodies, such as clubs of the best sort.

He should be a Good "Mixer."

A prominent school man said recently, regarding another who had lately gone as superintendent to one of our large cities, that he feared for him chiefly because of his inability to mix with men; he was not, in the language of the politician, a good "mixer." He said: "I suppose he has never belonged to a social club and would hardly know what to do in one." He did not overstate it. Such a superintendent is always in danger because of his lack of ability to assimilate and his failure to recognize the importance of other things than his own schoolmasterly duties. It is said of him that he is a mere schoolmaster, and it is said in reproach by people who would like to have him something more.

Should be Connected with Good Organizations.

No man can afford to be limited to his shop. The man who is a mere lawyer, a mere merchant, a mere manufacturer, that is, whose whole horizon is bounded by his business, is a small man, of necessity, and of little weight in the community. Particularly is this true of the schoolmaster, whose very position makes it important for him to be of considerable weight. Hence the duty of all superintendents to belong to

social bodies, membership in which is not inconsistent with professional dignity or with good standing in the community; to be active in organizations for educating the public in art, in literature, in music; for securing and maintaining courses of lectures, libraries, and concerts; to be especially active in broad philanthropic organizations, whether upon a religious or a secular basis, provided they are not controversial; to seek to bring the various organizations into proper relations with one another, and to magnify their usefulness in every way possible, particularly by bringing them into harmony with his own important work of public education.

Should Embrace All Educational Means.

The superintendent who does this accomplishes much by it. He makes life more worth living for himself; he becomes a larger man because of his broadened interests. It makes him a better superintendent; he better understands public needs and what he really ought to do for the schools. Too many school superintendents are limited to the purely professional view of their work, and often they go far astray in gauging public need. School people sometimes seem unwilling to admit that the parent has any special rights in regard to the education of his children by the public, or that he knows anything about it. The superintendent who comes in contact with many classes of people is not so likely to make this mistake. He not only magnifies himself as a man, he makes himself vastly more useful. He brings to the help of various good organizations his own technical skill and his wisdom as an administrator of education, and most philanthropic and social institutions need just such help and welcome it. The average eleemosynary institution is badly managed because there is no one connected with it who knows how. This is true also of a great many literary,

scientific, and social organizations of the better sort. The superintendent's help is most valuable, it is always welcome, and the rendering of it makes him a more useful man.

His Position Strengthened.

But above and beyond all this, the superintendent of schools who recognizes the whole field of education as his, and attempts to till it, strengthens his own specific work enormously. He brings to his support the best forces in the community, and in time of stress, when, for example, his educational theories are attacked, he finds it of the very greatest value to have such support. In no department of society have we got beyond the recognition of the personal equation — the man counts for more than his doctrine, always. The school superintendent who is, as he should be, in advance of his community, and who is, as he should be, continually bringing new things into the schools, endeavoring to improve them in the light of modern thought and discovery, is sure to be set upon by those parents and citizens who are satisfied with the old, and who measure the kind of training their children are receiving by the kind they themselves received when children. It is astonishing how many people are so well satisfied with themselves and their own training that they gauge all progress in matters of education and religion by themselves. This is perhaps the greatest obstacle the school superintendent meets in his attempts at progress.

Now, if he is a mere schoolmaster, limiting his field of activities to his office and the schoolroom, comparatively unknown in the community, even if he has formulated many admirable reports, proving incontrovertibly that his innovations are wise, the public is likely to reject them; but if the people know him, know his spirit and know him to be a wise and sensible man, when he says that some new

measure is good, they believe him. A few minutes' personal talk with a few of the "best people," the most influential citizens, by the superintendent who has their confidence, will do more to pave the way for possible reforms than all of the articles that he may write and publish. Because, after all, the public will stand by a person rather than a theory, and the superintendent owes it to himself, owes it to his schools, and owes it to his school board, to put himself in such a position in the community that the citizens will be ready to stand by him, even when they do not fully understand what he is driving at.

There are other means than those mentioned by which the superintendent of schools may make himself an important factor in the community and may strengthen his own hands as school superintendent. One is the proper use of the press. The editors of the leading newspapers in all of our towns are usually men of more than ordinary intelligence and anxious for the public welfare. If they can be made to see that the school superintendent is the right man for his place, and that what he is doing is best for his schools, they will usually be willing to support him.

Should Use the Press.

The superintendent of schools should make it a point to know personally, not merely the reporters, but the editors of papers, and first of all, the editors-in-chief, because no department of business, so far as I know, has its whole policy so entirely controlled by one man as the newspaper. He should also know the city editor and be on pleasant terms with him, and if he has a new scheme that is likely to be misunderstood, he should be at pains to explain it personally to these men before it goes to the public. In all my experience as a school superintendent I have never yet known an editor who was not willing, and even eager, to listen to all

I had to say to him upon educational subjects, and if he was convinced of its propriety, perfectly willing to support my scheme to the extent of his ability. I have always found it safe to let the editor-in-chief know what I had in mind, even before I published it, so that he might be armed when the time came, and never in but one instance have I known this trust to be taken advantage of and premature publication to ensue.

Newspaper editorial support is a very desirable thing. In general, if the superintendent cannot convince the editors of important papers that he is, in the main, right, a fair conclusion is that he is at least partially wrong. Further, in discussing with men who have as many possible points of view as a newspaper editor, the school superintendent himself is likely to get much light, if he keeps the windows open.

Should Use the Public Platform.

Another possible, and wholly proper, means of influencing the public is through public addresses. It is true that some school men are not happy in making addresses, but most men who believe in anything earnestly, and are sufficiently intelligent to be school superintendents, can express their views in an effective, if not attractive way. I recall now one school superintendent of mature years, who, like Demosthenes, overcame the greatest difficulties in order that he might be a good public speaker, and thus fulfil one of his proper functions in the community, and he succeeded remarkably well.

There are many occasions upon which the school superintendent, if he will and if he has the talent, can address the public upon educational topics. He is sure to be invited to make addresses before bodies of various sorts, and usually is expected to give an educational trend to his talk. Parents' organizations in connection with the schools offer per-

haps his richest field, but his opportunities are not limited to such organizations. Church functions, banquets of all kinds, and gatherings of various organizations, give him audiences, and he is an unwise superintendent who does not attempt to improve such occasions. It is a mistake to claim pressure of professional duties. These are professional duties of the highest order to one who takes the proper view of his profession.

Education is the whole of life. Naturally, the superintendent cannot control the whole of life, but he can aid its development. There are very many organized educative forces in the community besides schools, and the proper view is that they should all work together with the schools. Much of the very best work is done under philanthropic impulse, and the tendency to turn such beneficent institutions over to the control of the state is to be regretted.

The superintendent of schools who insists that other educational institutions, to receive aid from him, must come under his control and that of the school system, is likely to destroy sympathy and weaken the philanthropic impulse in the community, and while he may make an apparently more perfect machine, he really fails to accomplish the ends of such organizations as well as if he were to encourage independence.

The superintendent, then, should regard all education as his field, and should be ready not so much to absorb all educational institutions, as to extend himself to them with a helpful spirit. He should be the most prominent as well as the most useful man in the community in all matters which are, within the broadest possible scope of the term, education.

CHAPTER XX

The Supervisor and Teacher of "Special" Subjects

There is one phase of supervision that presents difficulties so far unsolved. I know of no satisfactory literature upon the subject, which is doubtless due to the fact that the problem has nowhere, so far as I know, been satisfactorily adjusted. I refer to the problem of those who are assigned to what are known as "special" subjects, in the capacity of supervisor or special teacher.

Difficulties of the "Special."

With the rapid expansion of the curriculum, many subjects have come into the schools which at first the regular class teachers were not able to teach properly, and some of which they doubtless cannot now teach properly. At least, the custom has become quite general of putting instruction in manual training exercises of all sorts, and drawing, music, and nature study, into the hands of specialists; that is, those who are supposed to have thorough acquaintance with these subjects, and who, theoretically at least, have received training in the art of teaching them. These specialists have come in by the side door, as it were. They are not class teachers; their authority is not clearly defined, and their work is not closely coördinated with the work of the schools, so that in most school systems much confusion has arisen in these departments. In some cases serious friction has occurred between the specialists and the regular teachers.

Two radical remedies might be suggested: One, to do away with the special teachers altogether and require the class-room teachers to teach all the special subjects; and the other, to organize the schools on a departmental basis, with all teachers practically special teachers, moving about and teaching their subjects to different classes. The departmental system has been discussed fully in Chapter VI.

Class-Room Teachers should Teach "Special" Subjects.

As to the first suggested remedy, it is doubtless true that if the class-room teachers are reasonably well prepared to teach the special subjects, it is much better to have them do it than to have special teachers come into the schoolroom, but it is also true that many teachers cannot teach some of the special subjects which a modern course of study demands. The number of teachers, however, who can teach all the subjects is steadily increasing, and the number of subjects that most of the teachers can teach is also increasing.

It is now seldom necessary to have special teachers for either music or drawing. The Normal Schools and Teachers' Training Schools of all sorts supply such adequate training that their graduates can usually teach these subjects under expert and proper supervision reasonably well. It is true there are still many who cannot teach one or both of them, but a wise distribution of the teachers will make it easy to care for the few special cases.

It is to be remembered that since these subjects were introduced a steady course of training has gone on not merely in the special schools, but in teachers' meetings and classes conducted by supervisors and specially trained teachers, in all or nearly all of our school systems. There are still, however, some subjects which are coming more and more

into the schools, that the average teacher cannot teach well. Perhaps the most conspicuous of these just now is manual training in its various forms. "Nature study" is in a transitional state; more teachers can teach it well than formerly, but there are still many who feel very weak and whose instruction is not highly edifying. "Nature study," however, is one of the special subjects that more than any other should be taught by the regular class teacher and carefully coördinated with the other subjects.

Expert Supervision Necessary.

In none of the special subjects — not even music or drawing — is it possible to get along without expert supervision; that is, teachers are not as well grounded in music and drawing as they are in arithmetic and grammar or other subjects of the curriculum, nor are the general supervisory officers as competent to give supervision; so that we must confess that for a long time to come there will of necessity be subjects in our course of study, that may be called "special," requiring teachers who must also be called "special," to give some or all of the instruction in these subjects. And it is quite certain that for an indefinite time it will be necessary to have at least expert supervision in these special subjects, so that neither of the plans suggested can be counted upon to solve the difficulty of the specialist. He cannot be obliterated; he must be coördinated with the system.

The present arrangement prevailing in most places is wretchedly bad. The specialists are viewed with distrust, and often with dislike, by the regular teacher. They upset programmes and disturb the order of the school, and often greatly add to the disciplinary troubles of the teacher. Sometimes, too, they seriously embarrass the situation, if they are good teachers of their special subjects, by leaving the class

teacher, who must be constantly with the children, in a very unfavorable light. These difficulties are not universal. In a few cases wise supervision and common sense on the part of the special teacher, or supervisor, or both, has partially solved them.

THE SPECIAL TEACHER

First let us consider the special teacher, the teacher who goes regularly to the class-rooms and gives instruction to the pupils in some one or more of these special subjects. His problem is really much simpler than that of the supervisor. His business is to go and teach, and not to supervise nor direct the regular teacher. If the instruction is given in the regular class-room with the pupils all present, the teacher should also be present in order to aid the special teacher, particularly in dealing with individual pupils, and if necessary, in keeping order, and also that he may learn as much as possible of the subject himself, for the ideal to be looked forward to by all is the teaching of these subjects by the class-room teachers.

The special teacher needs simply ordinary tact and common sense. Assumption of superiority to the class-room teacher and all indifference to the other work should be absolutely banished. The special teacher should seek to help the class teacher in coördinating all phases of the work; should study the possibilities of correlation, and should in every way try to be helpful though not in any sense officious. Some special teachers are always welcomed, both by the class teacher and by the children, while some are not, and it is simply a question of tact and personality.

Must not Assume Superiority.

THE SUPERVISOR

Second, the supervisor: This problem is very different indeed from that of the special teacher, because the supervisor of special subjects is a supervisory officer, usually with undefined power. He is not a superintendent and he is not a general supervisor. He is responsible to the superintendent for the instruction in his subject as it is given in the schools, but the question whether he is superior to the principal is a mooted one and always rising.

Is he to give his instruction to the teachers directly, disregarding the principal? If so, how can the principal be held responsible for the conduct of his school? Is he to give his instruction to the principal and let the principal give it to his teachers? If so, in the case of a technical subject, how can the supervisor be sure that it is correctly given to the teachers? If he gives the orders to the teachers, how can he be sure that he is not violating some order that has already been given by the principal? If the principal is the responsible head of the school, is the supervisor responsible to him for the instruction in his department in the school, or to some one outside of the school? And if to some one outside, how is the principal the responsible head of the school? What is the teacher to do after receiving contradictory or inharmonious orders from the supervisor and the principal? Is it to be understood in all cases that the instruction of the supervisor is the instruction of the superintendent? If so, can any subordinate official dispute it? If not, how can the superintendent enforce it? Is the supervisor to serve as a "buffer" between the superintendent and the public so that if the work is complained of in any department,

particularly if "fads" are denounced, he can hide himself behind the skirts of the supervisor?

These are some of the very practical questions which every one connected with a school system that has special teachers and supervisors will recognize, and while they cannot be answered finally here, a few suggestions may help the superintendents themselves towards a solution. Of course an easy answer, and a pretty reliable one, is that common sense will solve the difficulty in each specific case, but not all people have common sense, and a certain amount of organization is made necessary by this very lack.

A supervisor's instruction in a special subject should always be recognized as that of the superintendent of schools. If this is done it will greatly simplify the problem, but that this may be done some conditions need to be met.

Supervisor Represents the Superintendent.

The superintendent must keep in the very closest touch with the supervisors. He must know what the supervisor's plans are and what sort of instruction he is giving to the teachers; and the supervisor should understand that no instructions involving changes in plan or important considerations of policy may be given by him without first having received the approval of the superintendent. If it is understood by the teaching corps, the principal included, that every supervisor on visiting the school is an authoritatively recognized representative of the superintendent, the attitude of the teachers and principal toward the supervisor is easily determined. But if the supervisor gives instruction about which the superintendent does not know — hoes his own row independently of the rest of the force — constant confusion will arise and the superintendent will be called upon to support that about which he does not

know, or will be compelled to withdraw his support, which will be disastrous to the supervisor.

Not only must the supervisor be in close and sympathetic touch with the superintendent so that he can positively and with confidence represent him, but he must also recognize the position of the principal in the school. The supervisor, or superintendent for that matter, who comes ruthlessly into the school and gives general or specific instructions to teachers without the knowledge or approval of the school principal, is sowing the seeds of dissension and dissatisfaction.

Supervisor should Recognize Principal.

It should be the business of the supervisor, as of the superintendent, when visiting a school to talk very plainly with the principal about the situation, and if any new instruction of consequence is to be given, any new policy outlined, it should be made plain to the principal, and if possible, the principal's hearty and willing co-operation should be secured. If this attitude is taken, and the supervisor recognizes the principal as the head of his school and gives his orders, if he gives orders, or advice, if he gives advice, first to the principal and then to the teachers in so far as necessary, the principal can be held responsible for the work, and also for his attitude toward the supervisor.

Naturally, much instruction of a technical and detailed sort must be given by the supervisor in visiting schoolrooms, which does not need to be filtered through the principal, but such instruction should be fully in harmony with general principles already laid down, either by the supervisor in conference with the principal, or by the supervisor or superintendent, in a meeting, or by syllabi. Much time can be saved by making proper use of the various meetings of the supervisory officers with the teachers.

One serious difficulty in this connection often is the unwillingness of the principals to put themselves into the proper attitude toward special work. Principals should be invited and urged to attend meetings in which important instruction is given to the teachers, and should in so far as possible avail themselves of the opportunity. If this is done they are more likely to be in touch with the work and to be able to direct it intelligently in their own schools. Principals rely too much upon the reports that teachers bring them of meetings held with the various members of the supervisory force. It is difficult to be a good reporter, and very few people achieve it. Teachers are no exception, and so principals should attend these meetings themselves and get the same instruction that the teachers do, and then they can understand the special instruction given by the supervisor when visiting the school.

Principals should Attend Meetings of Teachers.

The principal is necessarily, as has been said, the responsible head of the school, and should be so recognized by all the supervisory officers, and yet the principal should be responsible for something definite. The general policy of the school system, the course of study and the broader phases of method, are of necessity laid down by the supervising force, and it is the business of the principal to master these, and to endeavor to make his school as good as possible along these specific lines.

While it is the duty of the supervising force in every way to strengthen the hands of the principal and increase his consequence, it is equally important for the principal not to set up a little machine of his own, but to work in harmony with the entire administrative force in bringing about results such as are approved in general.

If the principal of a school finds that the supervisor is giving instruction in his particular subject which does not seem to be in harmony with the general policy of the school administration or with the instruction received from the superintendent or supervisors at meetings, he should frankly discuss these questions with the supervisor first, and if unable to secure what appears to him harmony, he should take the matter to the superintendent, whose business it is to see that harmony prevail throughout the system.

In Cases of Difference Appeal to Superintendent.

If the supervisor finds that the principal is not carrying out instructions given, provided these instructions are such as the superintendent himself approves, but is working against the supervisor or against the system, giving instructions to teachers contrary to the general policy of the school administration, thereby creating discomfort, unrest, and dissension, it is the duty of the superintendent to come to the rescue and by either diplomatic or forceful measures to bring about harmony, or by radical measures of discipline to do away with the troubles. Of course the children are the ultimate sufferers from a lack of harmony in the administrative system, and next to the children the teachers are the sufferers if the supervisor and principal, and the various other "bosses," do not work together and do not recognize the teacher as an important factor.

Now what is the teacher to do to whom the principal gives one kind of instruction and the supervisor another? That will depend much upon the relations that exist between the teacher and the various supervisory officers. The occasion calls for tact, but if the relations are as they should be, the first duty of such a teacher is to talk plainly with the principal and to point out the discrepancies in instruction,

and if the principal insists that he is right and that his instruction must be followed regardless of what the supervisor says, as sometimes happens, upon the next visit of the supervisor, if the work is not done according to his instructions, the teacher should frankly tell the supervisor that he is acting under instructions from the principal. But this state of things should never occur.

If the principal takes this stand he should not take it with the teacher, which is cowardly, but should take it with the supervisor or superintendent and have it out. If the teacher finds the friction continuing, his only means of self-protection is to go to the superintendent himself and tell his troubles, and the superintendent should have such sympathetic relations with the teachers that this can be done in entire confidence, without danger to the teacher of falling from grace either with the principal or the supervisor, and if the superintendent is a wise, tactful, and strong head of the system, he can, either by tact or force, straighten out the difficulty.

These difficulties of which I have spoken arise chiefly because the supervisor of instruction in the special subjects has not been properly coördinated with the system. His place has not been made plain either to himself or to the principals, and the first duty of the superintendent should be to make absolutely plain to the supervisors, to the principals, and to the teachers, just what the office of the supervisor is, just what his authority is, just what he is expected to do, and just what the attitude of the other factors in the school system toward the supervisor should be. This should be made so plain that nobody can misunderstand.

Of course in dealing with human nature difficulties will arise. Jealousies, personal dislike on the part of teachers,

undue assumption of authority and superiority on the part of unwise supervisors, and all the other miserable catalogue of human frailties which teachers have in common with the rest of the children of Adam, make trouble, but if there is a perfectly clear and frankly stated relationship, or system of relationships, if the work and degree of authority of every supervisor and teacher is stated in unmistakable terms, then the problem is greatly simplified, and the only difficulties are those that have been mentioned and that may be expected to continue as long as human nature is still unregenerate.

CHAPTER XXI

The School Principal

The principal of the school is the single time-honored official found in a modern school system. The superintendent, supervisors, and all the others are recent products of new conditions, but the principal, the master, the head of the school as distinguished from the system, has a venerable history. For a very long time he had no superior officer, nor has he now, excepting in communities with fully developed systems of schools. And even in these the character of a school is largely determined by its principal. Even in the poorest systems there are always to be found schools standing out as bright exceptions to the prevailing average because they are presided over by good principals.

The Principal Historical.

The position and function of the principal are more nearly uniform than those of most officials. It is true that these have been modified somewhat by the development of systems, but these modifications have been on the whole slight, and the principal still is quite uniformly the responsible head of the school, with considerable authority granted by both written and unwritten law, and with power enough to make or mar the school in spite of superintendent, supervisors, and school board.

His Functions Comparatively Uniform.

He is usually quite secure in his office and not easily

removable except for really compelling reasons. Even in cities in which all teachers must be annually elected, the changes in principalships are usually few and either due to voluntary retirement or manifestly sufficient cause. This is as it should be and secures to the school a continuity of policy even in the midst of changing administrations of the system and changing teachers.

It enables the principal to become well acquainted with his constituency, to know his people, their domestic and social conditions, and their especial needs. He usually becomes an important factor in his community and the trusted adviser of many families. His relations with the children and their parents commonly are honorable to himself, useful to them, and productive of that happiness which comes from seeing the results of one's highest endeavors. Indeed, the principal should seek to be of the utmost consequence possible in his community. It is good for him and for the school. He should, however, avoid entangling alliances with organizations political, ecclesiastical, or other, which are partisan in character or controversial in activity. His attitude on all questions that divide the community should be either judicial or oblivious. That is, he should put none of his people on the other side of any artificial barrier.

An Important Factor in the Community.

Important as these larger relations may be, the real duty of the principal is, of course, to be the head of his school in all its various activities.

1. He is the *executive head*, and as such he must see to the running of the machine, even in all its details. He must keep the records and make the official reports, even when they are unnecessarily elaborate and heart-breaking. He must take care that the

The Executive Head.

sanitary and other physical conditions of the school are as good as possible. He must meet parents who come with complaints or children. He must see that the teachers are properly assigned, that the children are classified and distributed most effectively. His directing eye must be everywhere, that the teachers may teach under the best possible conditions.

There is unfortunately no need to emphasize these duties of the principal. The danger is not that they will be neglected, but that they will so absorb his time and thought as to exclude or minimize his higher and more important duties. "Ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin and forget the weightier matters of the law."

The encroachments of petty duties are insidious. The little demands upon the principal's time, calls for books or supplies, cases of "discipline," long visitations with callers, answering the telephone, and reports — always reports — are so constant that unless he is very watchful, more and more time is given to them until be becomes that most ineffectual, that deadest of pedagogues, the "*office principal.*" Every superintendent knows him. He is always there, in his chair at his desk. Seldom can he be surprised away from his customary spot, and if he is, he apologizes.

The "Office Principal."

As superintendent, visiting schools, I am always glad to have to hunt for the principal and find him in some classroom studying the work or helping the teacher.

I can fancy an overworked principal saying: "How am I to get time to do all these things if I do not stay in the office?" It is a fair question. The answer is, first by *system*. Have certain times for being in the office to attend to certain duties, such as issuing supplies, before school in the morning or after

Must not Sacrifice Important Interests.

school, or at certain hours during the session. Devise some method by which you can be called if a matter of sufficient consequence arises. Second, by *dispatch.* Attend quickly to matters of detail and distribute some of the work of preparing reports among the teachers in such a way that it will be burdensome to none. Third, cut the Gordian Knot; let some things go, if necessary. Determine what are the important things and do them whether or no. If any needs must suffer, let them be the less important. But with system, dispatch, and courage, usually all classes of duties can be properly done.

The Disciplinary Head.

2. The principal is the *disciplinary head* of the school, sometimes the punishing agent, the flogging machine, the bogie man, held up before terrified or unterrified youngsters by teachers who feel the need of backing. These functions, though, alas! not uncommon, are, of course, mere perversions and caricatures of the real disciplinary office of the principal.

Determines the Spirit of the School.

It is almost always the principal whose attitude determines the attitude of teachers and children alike toward school, its employments and its code. He gives the moral tone. If he is harsh and petty, teachers will either imitate him or shield the children from him, and the children will be rebellious, intimidated, or deceitful. If he places more stress upon conventions than upon principles, so will they. If he takes a broad, wholesome, and generous view of school life, treats the school as a democratic community, and relates all questions of conduct to its effect upon the common life, his spirit will permeate the school.

The principal is necessarily in all difficult questions of conduct the final arbiter, and to this end he must be just.

He will often need much tact, especially if an impulsive teacher is in the wrong in dealing with a pupil, when he must on the one side preserve institutional integrity and on the other save the pupil from injustice. In such a case, if he is wise and has sufficient weight of character, he will persuade the teacher to be just with the pupil.

Must be Just.

But his chief duty as disciplinary head is to be the living source of moral inspiration, lifting the school into his own clear atmosphere and creating a sane and stimulative school life.

3. The principal is the *educational head* of the school. It is in this regard that more principals fail of their duty than in any other. The principal does not determine what the children shall study, that is fixed by the course of study, though he must aid the teachers in interpreting the course. But taking any course of study, it is the principal who very largely determines whether in his school the children shall be wisely employed, shall get at the heart of the subjects pursued, shall really grow into life through nutrition supplied in the school, or shall feed on the husks of knowledge, the mere forms of things. Naturally, if the work of the school is to be worth while, his own attitude toward it must be right. To him, learning must mean living and growing and not merely memorizing symbols.

The Educational Head.

Determines the Spirit of the Work.

The principal must work primarily with and through the teachers. He will naturally exert some direct influence on the pupils even with reference to their studies, but his main work must always be with the teachers. He is the one official who can always

Must Work through Teachers.

come into close contact with them, can see their needs and really help them by personal friendly counsel.

He must visit schools a great deal. He should get into the rooms so often and so quietly that the work will go on as if he were not there. In these visits he should see much and say little, though he should occasionally conduct recitations, not, however, taking them from the teacher to show how.

Must Visit Schools.

He should have frequent meetings of his teachers, sometimes all together, sometimes in sections. These meetings should be for open discussion of the educational questions arising in the work, the interpretation of the course of study, the educational doctrine involved, the principles of control, or other fundamental questions, and these questions should always be carried back to their sources in philosophy or history. The time of teachers in meeting should not be wasted in the discussion of trifling questions of interest to only a few. The aims should be always instruction and inspiration.

Teachers' Meetings.

But the private conference gives the principal his great opportunity to help and uplift his teachers. He should hold these as frequently as possible with all his teachers, the old, experienced, and excellent as well as the young, inexperienced, and poor. To the former he can often give just the word of encouragement and advice needed to make a budding notion blossom, or can rouse a good plodding intellect to greater activity. In these conferences his interest must always be manifestly in the higher phases of the work.

The Private Conference.

Helping the Good Teacher.

A fine teacher said to me one day, rather sadly, that she was not altogether happy in her school. Close inquiry

drew from her the information that the trouble was with the principal. He had no real sympathy with her work. She was ambitious and capable. She wanted to do work above the average. She even had ideas for development. Her heart was in her teaching, in its higher possibilities, but the principal's heart was not there. It was rather in the machinery of the school. He would visit her occasionally, was never unkind, and she had, after repeated efforts, secured a half hour in which she might sit down with him and talk over her ambitions and schemes for finer teaching. The result was a chill and disheartenment, which, unless the fire burned very strongly, would in time impair her efficiency.

This principal was throwing away a golden opportunity. He wanted good work in his school and expected his teachers to teach well, but he was so concerned with the mechanical administration of his domain that he could not get into the heart of his teachers. The teacher had the freedom of isolation, not of society. She could not possibly do her best in such environment.

Helping the Weak Teachers.

But if the private conference is important to the good teacher, it is life itself to the young, inexperienced, or weak teacher. Such teachers give the principal his best opportunities. He can save them or doom them to failure in many cases. After sufficient visitation of the class-room to make sure of the cause of the trouble, a kindly, candid, encouraging, stimulating talk in private often sends the discouraged and failing teacher back to his work with courage and a little wisdom, and substitutes success for failure.

4. The principal of the school is in his highest function the *inspirational head* of the school, the friend and counselor

of teachers and pupils. He must see clearly, must live in a good world, must hold and personify high ideals, that his close personal relations with others may inspire them with strength and zeal for the better things. The school principal determines the character of the school society, he creates the school life, he is the personification of the school democracy. As the principal is, so is the school.

The Inspirational Head.

CHAPTER XXII

Home and School

The relations of home and school offer to the teacher perennial problems for solution. Most of them fall readily into two classes.

1. How to reconcile the often conflicting claims of the two institutions upon the time and attention of the children.

2. How to inculcate in the children ideals and standards of conduct often quite at variance with those prevailing in the home, without either arousing indignant protest from the parents or the children themselves, or creating a lack of respect for the home and the family.

The problems of the first class are really easier of solution than those of the second. They are quite largely matters of law which the teachers must enforce whether or no. Still, the method of enforcement will have much to do with the teacher's happiness and usefulness.

Moreover, law itself but represents a social condition, and it may be well to discuss briefly the social conditions indicated by existing laws conferring upon school officials authority to compel attendance and dictate courses of study and modes of control.

Compulsory Attendance and Socialism.

It is sometimes startling to those who fear the inroads among us of what we call socialism to think of the strides that have already been made in this direction by our most cherished institutions.

I suppose that no step in civilization has been so directly opposed to individualism and so complete a concession to the principle of state control as the establishment of schools for the education of all people and compulsory attendance upon them. In most states there are found upon the statute books laws which make it possible for public officials to go into every house and hale the children to school, putting upon the parents who object the task of proving that they are making sufficient provision for the education of their children. We regard justly the family as the bulwark of moral institutions, but it is a far cry from the stage of civilization, which gives the parent the power of life and death over his children, to that which says he may not even harshly punish a child nor put him to work in gainful occupations, but must rear him humanely and see that he is given a not inconsiderable intellectual training. In comparison with such a stride as this in socialism the mere assumption of control by the state of a public utility is an infant's step. And yet they are few who find fault with compulsory schooling, and for the most part they are not philosophers, but those whose selfish aims are interfered with. This is not intended in any sense as an argument for state control of utilities or any other movement toward socialism, about which there is much just fear. It is simply a statement of conditions as they are.

State Education Necessary.

The reason of this great movement is not far to seek. It is not an imitation of autocratic governments, assuming to dictate the life policy of each individual. It is merely the attempt of democracy to make its own permanency not only sure, but possible. In cases of extreme and manifest need philosophic discussion is forgotten. It was very early evident that if a free,

self-governing state is to exist, its people, the rulers, must be intelligent, and more recently we have come to realize that not only intelligence on the part of its citizens is essential to the perpetuity of democratic institutions, but that such wider training as shall make for character and social efficiency is equally necessary; and so our schools have gone on enriching their courses, increasing their demands upon the children, exacting more and more from the home, with little opposition, and the opposition is always only to the more recent additions, which, in a short time, themselves become recognized as necessities by all.

It is rather interesting as a social study to see how slight is the opposition to a minimum of compulsory school requirement; how gladly our people struggle, often at great sacrifice, to comply with the exactions of the law. The school laws in most states now require the attendance of children at school for a certain number of months of each year for a specific number of years, the amount varying greatly. These laws are more or less rigidly enforced by supervising officers or officers appointed for this especial duty. And notwithstanding the occasional pathetic cases, it is usually much wiser that these laws, like all laws, be strictly enforced. The teacher or school officer who attempts to mollify the exactions of the law is in error. That is not his function. If laws not good are strictly enforced, they will be repealed. If they are good, they admit of no exceptions.

But with the compulsory attendance laws the ordinary teacher usually has little to do. His problems are smaller and often more trying. They have to do with the requirements of the course of study and with the daily attendance. Naturally the course of study is prescribed by the board of education and must be interpreted and enforced by the

teachers, but the complaints regarding it usually come directly to the teachers, and that is a wise teacher who can satisfy the complaining parent without being disloyal to the system. When innovations have been made in the school course many parents are sure to find fault with them, frequently without justice. If teachers believe that the innovations are wise and that the course is a good one, they can more easily than any one else persuade the parents to that effect. If they do not believe in the curriculum and are inclined to make mischief, they can make more than anybody else.

The Teacher Must Meet Complaints.

This condition simply emphasizes what has already been said in discussing the duties of school officials, of the wisdom of taking the teachers into their confidence, giving them the reasons for all requirements, and educating them to continually higher standards. Those officials who thrust a new course of study upon their body of teachers without careful explanation and education leading to conviction are simply dooming their course to failure.

Teachers should be Taken into Confidence.

If the parents believe that the work that the children are doing in the schools is unwise, they are very sure to use stronger adjectives than "unwise" and to send the children to school with a prejudice, more or less strong, against the teachers and the work, which naturally interferes with success. So the first step in the solution of this particular problem is the education of the teachers to such an extent as to win their sympathetic and hearty approval of the work done in the schools.

The next step is to meet the complaining parents with patience and tact, explaining to them very fully why the work is as it is, inviting them to visit the school both

during regular exercises and during special occasions when work is exhibited for their benefit. Most of the difficulties attending the introduction of modern courses of studies into schools could be obviated by patient and continuous efforts to bring the parents to school and let them see the attractive and educative employments in which their children are engaged. In some places it has worked well to have special days in each month, or even in each week, for the visitation of parents — of course not excluding them at any time. For these special days invitations are sent out, carefully prepared and possibly written by the children; even illustrated invitations prepared by the classes are effective.

Need of Patience and Tact.

Secure Visits of Parents.

If an afternoon is selected, the first part of the time should be given to the regular work without variation, the parents being urged to visit different classes and see what is being done. It is well to follow this up with special, interesting exercises still growing out of the work and showing the finished product — sometimes a drama prepared by the children, sometimes oral recitations such as the telling of stories and the explanation of sand-table pictures by the pupils, while upon the walls the written work of the children is so displayed that it can easily be seen. Sometimes such gatherings are objected to because they interfere with the work of the school. Possibly they do to a degree, but it must be remembered that the best work of the school requires the sympathetic support of the home, and the little time given to these special days will be much more than compensated for by the increased interest and the strong support of the parents.

Special Visiting Days.

The parents' associations have been spoken of in another

chapter. These furnish opportunities for the school authorities to explain the work done in the schools.

These suggested devices for securing a desired end are to be regarded merely as such, and often the bright teacher will invent his own, better suited to his particular locality.

Necessity of Fixed Courses of Study.

All this takes for granted that we have finally accepted the right of the board of education to determine what shall be taught in the schools. There are many parents, some of them among the more intelligent, who strangely enough think that they are quite competent to determine what studies their children shall pursue, but it is one of the necessities of a public school system, caring for many children, that a certain degree of uniformity be preserved. This may at times operate even against the proper individualization of the work. To that degree it is unfortunate, and the teacher should be free so to modify the requirements so as to give the individual children what they need. But if we assume, as we do, in establishing a public school system with compulsory attendance, that the state is educating the children for citizenship, we must of necessity assume that the state knows what kind of training citizenship requires. There is no other logical conclusion, and while often mistakes are made, unquestionably they are fewer in number than if parents of all degrees of intelligence and ignorance were to determine what their children should study. As a matter of fact, there is almost nothing upon which the average citizen is less well informed than the principles of education, and while our teachers know none too much about them they do know more than most citizens, even intelligent citizens. The average citizen's judgment has a purely traditional basis. What he had as a boy serves as his criterion, and as in most cases

he is reasonably well satisfied with himself, he would give his children a training like his own. That is natural, but it is of course a purely personal judgment. So from both a philosophic and a practical point of view we must again admit that the municipality must not only compel children to go to school, but must determine within reasonable limits what they are to study.

Possibly a greater difficulty to be met by the teacher is the securing regular and prompt attendance at school. Many parents who concede the right of the state to compel attendance of all children at school for a certain number of months in each year, seek to reserve to themselves the right to determine when their children may be temporarily absent. This includes what is technically known as absence, that is, remaining away from school for at least an entire session, tardiness, or remaining away for the first part of a session, and also leaving school before its close.

Difficulty of Securing Attendance.

The conflict on these grounds is inevitable. The teachers, realizing the importance of regular attendance during entire sessions if the children are to progress regularly, and especially the delay and loss to the class as a whole caused by irregularity on the part of any of its members, are naturally strenuous in their efforts to secure prompt and regular attendance. Added to this motive is pride in a good record for the school, stimulated by the knowledge that the records of the various teachers are scanned by the officials and that comparisons are made. So that sometimes promptness and regularity become fetiches and absence and tardiness dreadful black beasts.

Conflict Inevitable.

On the other hand, the Great American Citizen, while he may concede in theory the right of state control, inwardly

and sometimes outwardly rebels against such control whenever it comes close enough to be felt. He avows his entire willingness, even anxiety, that his children shall attend school regularly, but insists that if he thinks it best to keep them out for a day for family or personal reasons, he is the judge, and he will do so.

Sometimes he is careful to explain the reason to the teacher, sometimes he absolutely refuses, more often he gives a perfunctory excuse, veiling his determination to do as he pleases. The reasons advanced vary all the way from serious personal illness to social functions and include running of errands for the family, taking care of the baby, bad weather, making or receiving visits, and countless other reasons too familiar to need rehearsing.

Variety of Excuses.

For tardiness the reasons are perhaps even more numerous and various.

Very frequently also word comes to the teacher, either in a polite note or in a brusque oral demand, that "John be excused at three o'clock." The reason is sometimes stated, sometimes not. When stated, it may be to go on an errand, to go driving, or, and more commonly, to take some lesson in music, or dancing, or other "accomplishment."

How is the teacher to meet these constantly occurring demands? Is the parent's claim always to be conceded? Is the teacher always to insist on a detailed explanation and then to exercise his judgment? Either of these solutions means trouble for the school and often hard feeling, if not actual war. Is there no middle ground?

Usually in urban schools the board of education offers some aid to the teacher by establishing certain definite rules,

presumably within its legal rights. These the teacher must enforce. The commonest of these requires in every case of absence, tardiness, or withdrawal a written excuse, properly signed, and stating the cause. Sometimes the rules go further and state certain excuses which alone may be accepted, and require suspension of the pupil after a fixed number of unexcused absences. While this is drastic, it certainly lifts the burden from the shoulders of the teachers. Frequently, however, the teacher or principal is allowed a certain amount of latitude, the use of which calls for the utmost tact.

Rules Fixed by Board of Education.

Legally, in most states at least, the power is all with the school authorities and the parent is compelled to yield. But the wise teacher will recognize the ethical claims of the parent and will seek to secure his co-operation. The teacher in approaching the subject should always bear in mind that the claim of the parent is prior, that all interference with it for any cause whatever is unfortunate and is excusable only on the ground of public necessity, and is in all cases at best but the choice of one of two evils.

Interference in Family a Choice of Evils.

Naturally and in the large, the best interests of the state cannot be in conflict with the best interests of the family. If they were, the family would be a deservedly doomed institution and we should revert to Spartan methods.

Ideally the parent, who is also a citizen, loves his children and loves his country. He knows what is best for both and voluntarily co-operates with the authorities to bring about a state of harmony for the common good which is also the individual good. He determines what is best for his children, taking into his view, however, his relations and theirs to society.

The excuse for interference by the state is based upon the notion, true or false, that the parent either cannot or will not do his part properly. It is at best but a bungling interference that we have, sure to make trouble and, because of the rebellious feelings aroused, likely in some degree to impair the good it aims to do.

Need of Care to Avoid Mischief.

So the teacher in enforcing laws which invade the family should be careful to avoid to the utmost bruising feelings. He should be considerate of actual conditions, and should not probe family secrets except in cases of manifest violation of the spirit of the law or of quite evident deception.

There are countless family woes, family skeletons, family tragedies even, not to mention the many petty, ignoble worries and wants, that keep children temporarily from school, but that the self-respecting parent would not disclose in an "excuse" under pain of torture. These the wise teacher will respect and cover with the mantle of blindness.

Importance of Co-operation.

For these difficulties, as for all possible conflicts between the home and the school, the surest remedy is mutual understanding and co-operation. To secure this the teacher should be most patient and persistent. He should be absolutely above the possibility of taking offense, but should seek by all honorable means to get into touch with the parents, especially the troublesome and unduly independent ones.

In most cases it is not difficult. The average parent will appreciate the manifest interest in his children and will welcome conferences in which the teacher and he exchange confidences as to conditions and needs. Even the obstinate parent who stands upon his rights as if defending the

constitution, will usually yield to the tactful pressure of the teacher for co-operation.

The solutions offered for these really serious difficulties of the teacher may seem inadequate, and they are. Psychological problems cannot be solved by mathematics, nor can you lay down fixed rules for conduct in dealing with others.

The work of the teacher is spiritual, his difficulties have to do with minds, and hence they are to be removed only by spiritual means. The right attitude toward the pupil and toward his work is the key to the higher success of the teacher. His work is to help each child under his control to make the most of himself. He must not be blinded to that individual insistent duty by any claims of system or the charm of uniformity. He should take a sensible rather than a technical view of all questions that come before him for settlement. For example, punctuality and regularity are important; they are so important indeed that they may almost be called technical or practical virtues. Yet, like all such formal claims upon the conscience, they may easily be over-emphasized.

Over-Emphasis of Punctuality and Regularity.

I have known tardiness to be made such a bogie that children would play truant rather than go to school late, while others would rush to school improperly clothed and without breakfast. Such emphasis indicates lack of perspective and shows that the teacher's view of his work is wrong. He is looking at its formal rather than its spiritual phases. If the school is right, children like to go and promptly.

In the problem here discussed the teacher must regard himself not as *in loco parentis*, but as the parent's helper. He is not the boss. Indeed the chief responsibility for the

child's welfare is not his, but the parent's. He is the parent's helper, and must suggest and use all possible means, not over the parent, but with the parent, for the child's growth. In particular he must not weaken but must strengthen the home in all possible ways.

Home Study of School Lessons.

Home study of school lessons is one of the minor problems to be considered in discussing the relations of the home and the school. In view of the many evils growing out of home study, one is tempted to decry the whole business and declare there should be no study at home. Indeed in the lower grades in a school organized with the usual two sessions, there should be none. There is time enough in the ordinary dual school session for all the studying that children under twelve years of age should do. If the school is properly organized, that is, divided into groups for recitation and study, the lessons of a suitable programme can all be prepared in school under the eye of the teacher, who directs the study as well as the recitation and sees that the children learn how to study.

The ordinary parent, however, is quite willing that his children should study at home. He likes to see them bring home parcels of books and work over them in the evening. He even likes to take a hand himself, especially in arithmetic, and show how superior the methods of the past were to those of the present. He seldom realizes how essential to the proper development of his children is play, and likes to see evidences of industry. He does realize that lessons to study give children occupation at home and keep them out of mischief for a time at least. In so far he is right and the school can to a large extent direct the home occupation of children without taxing their minds by over-time work.

It is often remarked by parents that the children attending the kindergarten and the lower primary grades of a good school take care of themselves at home to a surprising extent. The games and exercises of the modern elementary school involve so many elements of interest and cover such a wide range that they run over into the home and furnish children with amusement and occupation for many hours, to their profit, and the relief of the tired mother. The same general principle applies to the higher grades. Without setting children to conning lessons at home, the teacher can largely give direction to their activities, both healthful and educational.

Home Study should be General.

He can direct their reading. All children, practically, read at home, sometimes to their detriment. The modern curriculum offers so wide a range of interests that it is not difficult for teachers to give children the best reading by suggestion offered in connection with some subject pursued in school. The co-operation of the public library is especially helpful here and is always easily obtained.

Nature study offers another field for healthful and profitable home work. So many delightful and interesting activities and investigations may be suggested which can best be pursued afield.

Manual training in all its forms offers still another field for profitable activity at home. Children like to make things to bring to school for the general good.

Through all these and other activities social training may be secured. Looking up topics for the history class or the geography class; searching for specimens for the nature study lessons; making things with tools to illustrate some lesson — all are good training for co-operative life, which is democratic citizenship.

In the higher grammar grades a certain amount of specific study at home may be required, but it should be strictly limited and should in so far as possible be of that general sort suggested for the primary grades.

In high schools, especially those having but one session, home work is necessary. But here, too, it is commonly overdone, often to the physical and intellectual detriment of the children.

It is too often taken for granted that children cannot study in school, especially when other recitations are going on. It is a false assumption. They can and do when the work is of the right sort. Indeed this power of absorption is one of the most valuable of all the gifts of the school. The programmes of all schools should be so arranged as to allow the greatest amount of time possible in school to be devoted to study.

Children should Study in School.

For the work that must be done at home the most careful inquiry should be made of the children regarding home conditions for study and the time necessarily and properly devoted to recreation. The parent should be consulted, and sometimes the family physician. A year of light work even at the cost of class standing, during the earlier years of adolescence, often means the saving of both health and happiness.

Dangers of Overwork during Adolescence.

The second class of problems has to do with the inculcating in the children of ideals and standards of conduct, often quite different from those prevailing in the home, and, it must be admitted, usually higher. Teaching standards of conduct is under all circumstances a perilous undertaking. Only the ignorant are absolutely sure, and yet we have a right to our judgment, and children must have training. The danger

Moral Standards Different from Those in Home.

attending instruction in morals in the school is considerable. We are very sure to run up against prejudices in regard to standards, and to find that some of the things taught in school distinctly contravene the doctrine taught in the home. This is particularly true of specific instruction with regard to moral conventionalities. The dangers are twofold; either the children, having faith in the home, indignantly reject the counsel of the teacher, or, believing in the superiority of the school standard, lose respect for home and parents.

The so-called temperance instruction required by law in most of our cities, while it has undoubtedly accomplished much good in many places, has, by its very intensity, at times encountered both of these dangers. Some children, having been taught that what the teachers say in this matter is extreme, go to the other extreme, and are injured not only in mind but in actual habit by the instruction. Others, recognizing the wisdom of the advice, finding it opposed in the home customs, become nuisances in the family and sometimes treat their parents with less than becoming respect.

Dangers of Condemnation.

Almost the only advice that can be given on such subjects is that the teacher should exercise great tact and be exceedingly careful to say nothing that may be deemed to reflect upon the parents of the children. It is better to advise the children what course to pursue than to criticise courses of conduct; that is, the work should be positive rather than negative; and it should deal with those subjects upon which most right-thinking people are agreed. Manners, of course, must be taught, but the teacher should be very careful not to apply phrases which may be offensive.

The experience of the superintendent in one of our larger cities who went into a school, and, standing before the

children with his hands in his pockets, asked them who he was, is perhaps typical. They, not knowing the distinguished gentleman, made no answer, but as he urged them to make a reply, finally a timid hand was raised and a small lad upon receiving due encouragement remarked, "You're no gentleman." The superintendent somewhat nonplussed looked at the teacher and the children. The teacher blushed and appeared greatly embarrassed, but the children nodded approval of the answer, "Certainly, you're no gentleman." A little inquiry developed the fact that the teacher had told the children that no gentleman stood with his hands in his pockets. This is a good illustration of unwise instruction. It was quite right to teach the boys to stand erect with their hands in proper position, but the extreme statement was dangerous. I have known teachers to say, "No gentleman will smoke," or, "No gentleman will drink a glass of wine." The teacher may believe these statements true; but many of the children have fathers who do both these things and who desire to be regarded by their children as gentlemen. Condemnation in general statements is always to be avoided. The teachers should teach good manners and good morals, but, as I have said, usually by suggestion and example rather than by definite dicta. A story of some one performing a good act or showing courtesy is worth more to the average child than many sermons. But, chiefly, the life of the school should conform to the highest standards that the teacher believes in, and this without much talking. If the teacher is always courteous, if his conduct in and out of school is above reproach, his courtesy and his conduct are soon reflected in the school life, which the children absorb. By living a high, worthy life, they acquire the habit. Life is the result of life.

It is wise to have frequent personal, tactful conversations with the parents. Even in the most delicate matters frank consultation as to the conduct of children, although that conduct may be an imitation of what they have seen at home, will almost always win the support of the parents. The father who swears even in the presence of his family, the father who smokes, the father who drinks even to excess, is bitterly opposed to the same habit in his boys, and the parent who is rude does not want his children to be rude. Indeed, the standard of the home is sometimes raised by the wise teacher, consulting the parent as to conduct in school which has really grown out of the conduct at home. But in all these matters nothing can take the place of common sense and tact. *Recognize always the superiority of the home and its sacredness, and under no circumstances weaken the authority of the parent.*

Interviews with Parents.

Priority of Claim of Home.

CHAPTER XXIII

Some Social Functions of the School

In the past the public school with its equipment fulfilled important social functions, especially in rural and village communities. It was the neighborhood center and the gathering place for various purposes of the comparatively homogeneous people living in the district. The meeting-house and the town hall (if the community boasted such a building) served for the larger gatherings in which all the people were interested, while the schoolhouse supplied the neighborhood need.

Social Functions in the Past.

Here gathered young and old for the time-honored spelling match, which not only set the community searching the spelling book and the dictionary in anticipation and in post-mortem review, but which furnished the excuse for other social functions.

Here the itinerant writing-master used to assemble the youths and maidens of the neighborhood and drill them in marvelous pothooks and flourishes, leaving with each one at the end of the season some delectable bird or scroll with his signature deftly concealed. But the youths and maidens who gathered weekly in the schoolhouse to receive his instruction reaped much larger social results than they or the teacher knew.

Here the singing teacher, often the schoolmaster himself, at regular intervals gathered his flock and drilled it

in the singing of the scale and of old-fashioned rounds and psalm tunes, and laid foundations for the village choir. It was in the schoolhouse that Ichabod Crane instructed the youth of Tarrytown in nasal melody.

Here, too, the debating club of the neighborhood would meet, while the intellectually stalwart swains proved to the satisfaction of their fair admirers and the discomfiture of their opponents, that the pen was mightier than the sword.

The people of the neighborhood considered the schoolhouse as the center of their intellectual life and there they gathered for varied purposes, but with the one uniform result, that the social harmony of the community was increased and its intellectual life was stimulated.

Present Need of Social Centers.

Of late there has been a revival of interest in the social uses of the school. This revival is in no sense a forced product; it has grown out of manifest needs, both in the country and in the city. No people in the world stand more in need of democratic social centers than do we. There is little, except our political life, that we have now in common with our neighbors. This is naturally most notable in cities, but it is true even in the country. Practically nowhere have we any more a community of people who are alike in birth, tastes, religion, moral ideals, or intellectual outlook, excepting in certain regions where foreigners of the same nation and religion have settled and maintain their foreign speech and customs, to the peril of American institutions.

But people who live together inevitably feel the desire for some common ground of life. There are so many interests in common, even among those who are strangers and widely diverse in character and aim, that it is necessary for

them at least to understand one another if even the material interests of life are to be well served.

School Plant Idle Much of the Time.

Within recent years it has come to the minds of many that the public school, with its expensive equipment, idle more than half the time, could be made to furnish the social center for which there is such crying need, and a very wide movement has gone on, apparently almost of itself, in various parts of the country, looking to the utilization of the public school plant for very many community purposes. In some places, especially in small communities, there has been a return to something like the conditions of fifty years ago, — people making use of the schoolhouse to meet various social and intellectual needs. But a condition can never repeat itself, and the meetings of the present and of the future in public schools will necessarily be quite different from those spontaneous gatherings of the past.

There is not room in this book, nor is it the purpose of the writer, to discuss in extensive detail the various schemes for making social use of the school. That is a large subject in itself, and is likely to receive adequate discussion from specialists. But it seems desirable to point out a few of the possible uses of school property, and some that are especially educational in character.

TWO MOTIVES FOR GATHERINGS

It must be borne in mind that there are always two main motives for gathering people together in the schoolhouse. One is the immediate supplying of some local need. This may be called the "efficient cause." The other, and the more important, is the getting of people together for the influence of the gathering itself upon their minds, — the

harmony and community of thought and feeling which may grow out of it. People who gather regularly for any cause get the habit of common thinking and of common effort. It is this democratic aim of the meeting in the schoolhouse which is its "final cause."

Two Classes of Organizations.

There are, in general, two classes of organizations that are beginning to use the schoolhouse for their meeting-place. One is under the immediate direction and control of the public authorities; the other, voluntary and for needs appealing to the people of a neighborhood. The former we find especially in very large cities, — roof playgrounds, open gymnasiums, public libraries, popular lectures — all educational and on somewhat the same basis as the public school itself, maintained and directed wholly by public officials. These serve the purpose of taking youths and adults from unwholesome to wholesome surroundings, and giving them reasonable and valuable employment for their evening hours. They do not serve in the highest degree the harmonizing and democratizing ends so essential to our people. They are an extension of the function of the public school along similar lines, and under the same control.

Value of Voluntary Organizations.

Vastly more important than this movement, important as it is, is the voluntary assembling of people living in the vicinity of a schoolhouse for purposes directly or indirectly connected with education, especially the perfecting of permanent organizations of these people with the schoolhouse as the gathering place and the social center.

The purposes for which such organizations can be formed are various. Any aim which is in itself worthy and dignified, even if not strictly educational, provided it is not in any sense

controversial — that is, any aim which tends to stimulate the higher intellectual and social life of the community without arousing antagonisms — is a proper basis for an organization connected with the school.

Study of Education the Best Motive.

The most natural subject, at least for the beginnings of this movement, is education itself. The rapidly spreading popular interest in education is sufficient to form the motive of an association in connection with almost any school. There is in many communities a positive thirst for knowledge as to modern educational principles. Parents realize that the schools are very different from the schools of their youth, and while some are dissatisfied, others honestly seek to understand what the changes mean, and nearly all are willing to listen to explanations of the new things that their children tell them about, some of which they are prone to condemn.

THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

First the Mothers' Club.

Naturally the first organization to have its place of meeting in the school is what has come to be known as a "Parents' Association," organized at first definitely and specifically for the study of educational principles. Sometimes this association takes in its earlier days a very modest form, that of a mothers' club. Such clubs have been organized by kindergartners in many parts of the country for the study of some of the simpler problems of the training of little children. The mothers gather at these meetings with the kindergartner as the leader, usually to talk over their children and the work of the home as related to that of the kindergarten. As a result, they get some light on educational questions; they become acquainted with the kindergartner and come to

understand her spirit, and they begin to be acquainted with one another. The Swede, the Pole, the Russian, the Teuton, the English and the Yankee, are brought together under the common sentiment of motherhood, and in these meetings rub off a little of the natural antagonism and take to their homes a little sweeter spirit as a result. They also begin to regard the school as not simply the place to which their children are sent for a few hours each day, but as a directing force in the education of these same children even in the home.

The parents' association, proper, is an organization of fathers and mothers, and citizens generally who are interested in education. Its meetings are held in the schoolhouse and vary in character according to the community. Usually some address, or addresses, are made by educational experts, either connected with the local system or not, on topics directly related to the education of children and adapted to the immediate local needs. These meetings are held at regular intervals under some definite organization and programme scheme. Occasionally features of entertainment are added and after the formal meeting the time is devoted to social intercourse.

If the association is well managed, and the interest maintained, the organization is likely to take on a more definite character and to enlarge its scope. Frequently there are several committees whose business it is to look after its various interests, and to co-operate with the school people in furthering the interests of the local school. In some cases definite plans of study are outlined and taken up by such members as are sufficiently interested to pursue them. Not infrequently adjunct associations are formed, such as boys' clubs and girls' clubs for

Definite Plans of Study.

legitimate and proper purposes. Frequently associations of the former pupils of the school are organized, either in connection with the parents' association, or independently.

Strengthen the School.

All of these bodies center about the local school, from which they derive their motive and impulse. When well conducted and persistently maintained they are of inestimable value to the school authorities and to the community. Any school officer who has not enjoyed the advantages of such organizations cannot realize the gain to him in local support from this getting together of the school's patrons for an intelligent discussion of the work of the school. The result is almost invariably enthusiastic devotion, sometimes even more enthusiastic than intelligent, but the gain is real. It manifests itself in political support, but, more important still, in educational support. The undertakings of the school, being understood and having been discussed and approved by the association, are supported in the home, and that direful lack of harmony, that most disastrous criticism of teachers and teachers' methods which are so common and which tend to destroy the respect of the children for the school and to impair the work of the school, disappear under the softening influence of a common understanding.

Cultivates Democracy.

Moreover, the community gains immensely in democratic spirit. The fact of the coming together of many citizens with a common motive and a common interest, and that interest the highest of all that concerns them, tends to create a common consideration and sympathy and understanding which are essential in a democratic state. The support and the far-reaching effects to the school, both educational and social, of these gatherings cannot be computed.

Now a few practical suggestions as to the organization and support of these associations. Almost of necessity the original mover must be some one connected with the local school, preferably the principal. He and his teachers should by private conference secure first the influence and interest of a few of the more intelligent and influential citizens of the district. They should, through written and oral invitations, get as many parents as possible to visit the school and become interested in school work even before the meetings are held. Days of appointed visitation, for which formal cards of invitation written by the children and signed by the teachers are sent out, often facilitate the movement at its beginning. Then as soon as a considerable degree of interest is aroused, a meeting may be called by the principal and the teachers and by several citizens of the district.

Principal Usually the Mover.

The first meeting is an important one. It should be made interesting. Whatever is done should be adapted to the local intelligence and character. It is often well to provide material refreshment and some features of entertainment upon the programme, but there should be an educational trend which will catch the attention of the people and lead them to want more of the same sort.

First Meeting Important.

Usually in perfecting the organization it is better for the school people themselves to keep in the background and let those assembled elect their own officers from among the parents. The principal and some teachers should be upon important committees in order to see that the organization does not run away with itself, but they should rather work from behind than conspicuously.

Officers should be Laymen.

After the organization of the association, its permanent success will depend upon the character of the programmes offered at the meetings. Interest must be maintained and too much repetition avoided. But it must always be borne in mind that the purpose of the association is educational and that all adjunct bodies and all plans of work and entertainment should tend to keep up interest in the school and in education and to strengthen the hands of the teachers.

Those conducting the associations need to be careful not to be so ambitious as to shoot over the heads of the citizens; also to be careful to interest in active work as many citizens of the community as possible. The committees should include representatives of all classes and an effort should be made to set large numbers of the people at work.

Political Power Great.

The political power of such organizations is immense. If we could have in every school district a body of citizens reasonably intelligent upon educational questions, and profoundly devoted to the school, it would be much less easy for the politician and the political school board to use the schools for political ends.

There is no occasion for fear that the organizations will be overactive. Such may be the case now and then, but it will be but temporary, and overactivity is much to be preferred to inactivity. It must be remembered that progress in education will not go very far in advance of its appreciation by the average citizen. The progress which is made without the approval of the community is likely to be short-lived and to end in reaction, so that for every reason, social and educational, associations of parents and allied organizations, making the public school the center of the higher community life, should be encouraged.

There are sometimes objections to the meeting of these organizations in the schoolhouse, on the ground that the furniture and equipment of the school building are peculiarly adapted to school purposes and to no others. It is true that the furniture of the modern schoolroom is not well adapted to free gatherings. (It may be not out of place to say here that it is not well adapted to school purposes either, and at some time rational furniture will replace that which is now in use.) But there are certain very simple remedies which may be employed with little effort. In the rooms which it is desirable to throw open for evening assemblies, the desks can be placed in rows upon strips of wood so that they may be easily shifted or lifted to one side, making room for movable furniture. Ultimately it is to be hoped that all schools will be equipped with gymnasiums, assembly halls, and other places suitable for such gatherings.

Adaptation of Furniture.

CHAPTER XXIV

School Laws

The laws under which school boards and school systems are organized, while not directly within the province of the average teacher, are still of great consequence to him, inasmuch as they affect materially his tenure of office, his freedom, and his chances of success. Certainly all teachers should be intelligent as to the laws relating especially to their profession. Hence it has seemed best to devote a chapter of this book to a brief discussion of the various systems of legal control of schools prevailing in this country.

No National System of Education.

We have no national system of education. The Bureau of Education, connected with the Department of the Interior in Washington, has at its head a commissioner. His functions, however, are wholly academic. He owns no offices; he has no patronage to distribute; he has no control whatever over any school system or any school-teacher in the United States, with the exception of the Indians and other wards of the nation. As the work of the Bureau has thus far evolved, it is confined to the gathering of facts and statistics and the publication of documents of information, separately at times, but chiefly in the form of an annual volume. Practically the sole influence of the Department of Education upon the country is that exerted by the personality of the Commissioner. It is impossible in this book to discuss the wisdom or unwisdom

of our present lack of national control of schools, and whether it would be desirable to exalt the Bureau into a Department and place funds at its disposal.

Our systems are state and local. All the states in the Union assume the prerogative of controlling to a greater or less degree public education within their borders. This function has been chiefly exercised by the legislatures of the states in passing laws to give authority to local bodies to control schools and school systems, though there has been of late years an increasing tendency toward the assumption of other powers by the state, and more and more it is becoming customary for states to contribute money from their treasuries to public education. This money, of necessity, is distributed by a central authority, which gives the state itself some control over local school affairs, but almost universally the funds are distributed among the local bodies to be disbursed by local authorities, the state's control being limited to the establishment of conditions which must be met before funds can be received. This statement does not include special state institutions, as normal schools and universities, which are not within the scope of the purpose of this book.

Tendency toward State Control.

These conditions vary in different states, but commonly have reference to the length of the school year and the qualifications of the teachers, and sometimes to conditions hygienic and other of the school buildings and grounds. In some states the central authority goes so far as to control the licensing of teachers through fixing a minimum standard, but generally the state control is very loose and perfunctory. Very few states have any adequate provision for the supervision of the schools, this being regarded as a local matter, though

Wide Variations among States.

there is a tendency to increase such supervision under state control in the more progressive states. Minnesota, for instance, has state inspectors for schools of different grades, as one for high schools, one for graded elementary schools, and one for ungraded schools, and the control of certain funds voted by the legislature, to be distributed on the basis of a fixed standard of efficiency, makes this supervision effective.

STATE CONTROL

In most of the states the head of the Department of Education is a State Superintendent, whose powers, as I have indicated, vary from the vaguest to those of considerable consequence. In some states the superintendent is the only official bearing relations to all the state educational institutions, though boards exist for the government of special institutions, such as normal schools, state universities, schools for the care of the defectives and the like. In some states a single State Board of Education has control of all of these, the State Superintendent meeting with the Board. In Massachusetts and some other states there is no State Superintendent, the secretary of the State Board performing many of the duties which the State Superintendent usually performs, but the State Board itself here exercises considerable authority.

The control of local schools is in most states assumed either by counties or by municipalities. County control is commonly exercised only over rural and village schools, the municipalities within the counties having independent systems, though in some states, as Georgia, for example, the county superintendent is also the superintendent of all city schools in the county.

RURAL SCHOOLS

In the rural districts, in most states, each school district has its local school committee, which appoints the teacher and in a general way controls the school affairs of the district, subject to a limited control by the county superintendent, though in some states a town or township committee has taken the place of the local district committee and appoints the teachers for all the districts of the township.

TOWN CENTRALIZATION AND TRANSPORTATION

A recent movement, which has gained much headway in a few states, tends to do away wholly with the local district school and to gather the pupils of rural townships into central schools, the community furnishing transportation. This system has very much in its favor. It makes it possible for the community to have a more complete and properly ventilated, lighted, and heated schoolhouse; carefully selected, trained teachers, working under proper supervision and properly classified; and pupils properly grouped and graded. In short, it provides the rural school children with many of the advantages of village and city schools. The cost of the transportation of pupils is more than compensated for by the reduction of the expense incident to the maintenance of so many small rural schools. A plan so rational, so economical, and so helpful is sure to gain popular approval, and undoubtedly in a few years the isolated schools will have disappeared from the most enlightened states, and the centralized schools will have replaced them.

In most states the teachers of rural schools, though often appointed by the local committees, must be licensed by the

county superintendent. The county superintendent is in some cases elected by the people, as in Minnesota, and in some cases appointed by the State Board of Education, as in New Jersey.

MUNICIPALITIES

As has been mentioned, in most states the municipality, whether village or city, is an independent school district, controlling its own educational affairs. The controlling body is usually a board of education, and here even this degree of uniformity ceases. There is the greatest diversity of method in regard to practically all other elements of control. These differences are due largely to local history. Our various school systems have not been made upon a single pattern, but have grown up out of purely local conditions. Many of them may be said to have happened. They have been simply the most convenient devices resorted to by people who wished their children to have schooling, but who knew nothing of the best ways. Yet it is often true that because of the long continuance of a system, and the fact that people are used to it, it is unwise to substitute another which may be theoretically better. It is frequently much wiser to improve and make the best of the prevailing system than to introduce radical or violent changes which the people do not understand and which necessarily arouse antagonism and opposition. In a previous chapter the educational powers of the board have been referred to, and perhaps treated with sufficient fullness for the purposes of this book. So I will confine myself here to the methods in vogue for securing boards of education and to their extra-educational functions.

Local Differences Often Historical.

Radical Changes Often Unwise.

Boards of education vary in size from three members to more than one hundred, and commonly the size bears slight relation to the size of the community. For convenience in discussion, boards may be divided into two classes, large and small, calling boards of nine members or fewer small, and boards composed of more than nine large except in the three very large cities.

Boards Vary in Size.

One of the mooted questions of the day is as to the relative excellence of large boards as compared with small, the tendency in thought and practice being towards smaller boards, although some very able leaders of educational thought, notably United States Commissioner William T. Harris, believe in large boards.

Another question is whether these boards should be elected at large, all the members representing the entire municipality, or by wards, voting precincts, or other technical divisions of the municipality. Here again the tendency of modern thought is toward the election of members at large for the entire community.

In some cities there is a dual representation, — some members of the board being elected at large and some representing divisions of the city.

There is also diversity as to the methods by which members of school boards obtain office, the two prevailing methods being appointment by some central authority, and election by the people. In the case of appointed members, the appointing power is usually the mayor of the city, though not always. In a few cases the appointment is made by the Common Council; in at least one, as Philadelphia, by the judges of the District Courts; in also at least one, as Milwaukee, by a special commission, whose members are themselves

Plans for Securing Membership.

appointed for this sole purpose; and in at least one other by the Governor of the state. In a few cases a committee of the Common Council acts as board of education; this is true in Buffalo.

Term of Office.

Moreover, members of boards are elected or appointed for terms varying from one year in some places to seven in others, so that in some places the whole board, in others half the board, and in still others a varying minority, retires at one time.

Powers of Boards Vary.

Again, the extra-educational powers of the board vary greatly. In a number of cities the board is a taxing body, determines the levy for educational purposes, and collects and disburses the funds without control by any other municipal officials. In others the board has no power but to take the money given it by some other authority and to spend it under very strict limitations; and in some cities, as in Boston, it is not even allowed to build school buildings. The purse strings are held in some cases by the Common Council, and in others by a municipal board of finance.

No Legal Panacea.

It is evident from the above that we have no uniform system for the control of public education. All who are reasonably well acquainted with school conditions, however, know that there are both good schools and bad schools under practically all conceivable conditions. There is no legal panacea for educational ills. Under whatever system schools are conducted, unless the people are vigilant, the schools will suffer. No method of appointment, left unguarded, will of necessity secure a good school board. An inference to be drawn from these remarks is that, in general, the nearer the board is to the people the easier is it for the people's wishes to be reflected.

Manifestly, it is impossible to discuss all the various systems outlined above, but we may discuss briefly a few general principles which affect most of them.

LARGE OR SMALL BOARDS

Is it better to have large boards or small? The main argument for the large board is that the people are better represented; that all classes and all localities can have representation in a large board, and as a consequence all interests are more likely to be looked after; and that popular interest in education is likely to be kept at a higher plane if the people have many representatives, as there will be necessarily many centers of influence. Another argument is that it is much more difficult in a large board for cliques or small parties to secure control; that there can be nothing like a close corporation or a star-chamber proceeding with a large legislative body, while small boards can meet quietly and even secretly, and if corrupt can much more easily escape detection.

Arguments for Larger Boards.

More and more, however, popular sentiment has been tending away from the large school board, and this change of sentiment has grown out of conditions.

It has been found that small boards are more efficient than large boards; that work is done by them more speedily and more carefully; that it is easier to fix responsibility for misdeeds. Large boards are always organized on the committee plan; the larger the board the greater the number of committees and the more minute the division of function. Committees are created, not because the work of the school board naturally divides itself into so many parts, but in

Inefficiency of Sub-Committee Plan.

order that school board members, as many as possible, may have chairmanships. As every one familiar with legislation knows, in the greater number of cases the action of committees is practically decisive — that is, legislative bodies generally pass their reports without much deliberation or consideration. The committee represents the majority and the majority stands by the committee, so that often very important matters are decided, not by the board of education, but by some small section of the board whose members happen to be assigned for political reasons to a particular committee, for whose work they are frequently wholly unqualified.

Responsibility Hard to Fix.

Moreover, in large boards it is practically impossible to fix responsibility. If there is corruption the condition is represented by Nast's famous cartoon of the Tweed Ring, each one pointing with his thumb to his neighbor and remarking, "It's him."

Limitation of Powers.

The tendency of the present time is to limit the powers of boards of education to legislation, and to employ for all executive functions expert officials, as a superintendent of schools, a superintendent of buildings and others. This arrangement makes it possible to hold officials responsible, and also diminishes the burden of duties of the members of the board, and makes it less necessary to have many committees. It is in accordance with the modern tendency in municipal government to centralize authority.

In most cases large boards are elected by the people and represent sections of the municipality. Comparatively few large boards are appointive. In Philadelphia there is a large board, appointed, as has been said, by the judges, and there have been, until very recently, also sectional boards with

practical control over the schools of the sections, the duties of the central board and its officers being greatly circumscribed. This system is about the worst conceivable, and has recently been modified by lessening the authority of the local boards.

REPRESENTATION

Shall boards be elected or appointed at large, representing the entire community, or shall the members represent districts? The argument for the latter, which is the old and disappearing plan, is that the sectional board represents the people better; that unless each district has a representative in the school board, the districts not represented by residents are likely to suffer; and that the small board, whose members may perhaps all live within one part of the city, is likely to overlook the needs of the remaining parts, and to favor especially its own districts.

Large Board Represents People.

Here again the theory does not seem to agree with the common experience. There is no doubt a certain local pride and local jealousy in boards whose members represent districts, but instead of this working to the interests of the individual districts, it too frequently results in bickering, disagreements, delays, and in bargains, corruption, and all iniquity. I have known the discussion as to the location of a school building, whether in one ward or another, to prevent the erection of any school for years, the children going without proper school facilities meanwhile. Each member, feeling that he represents a district and not the municipality, is likely to see only the needs of his own district and to ignore other parts of the city equally deserving and needy, or more so.

Futility of This Argument.

The smaller board, of necessity, takes in the needs of the entire community. Citizens of any particular district may be relied upon to see that the needs of their district are presented to the school board. The school board then assumes a judicial attitude and decides what districts are in the greatest need and where money can be spent to the greatest advantage to the city as a whole. The results are almost always better than under a sectional system. To secure the representation of local interests the school laws of New York City provide for local boards without authority, whose duties are to inspect the schools of their districts and advise the school board regarding them. Theoretically this is a good plan.

Small Board Must be Judicial.

It is much easier to secure good school board members if they represent the whole city than if they represent districts. Under the latter system local petty politicians can have "pocket boroughs" and retain their positions on the school board to the disadvantage of the community for years, against the wishes of the better citizens and of the community as a whole. I recall in one city a school board member who was both ignorant and immoral and who commonly came to the school board meetings intoxicated, but who held office for years, greatly to the distress of good citizens, until finally the board of education itself was legislated out. He represented a small precinct composed of people so like himself that no one could beat him at its polls. He could not have been elected on even the worst general municipal ticket, and no mayor would have dared to appoint him.

Easier to Secure Good Members.

In case of an elective board, the members nominated by the different parties must stand the scrutiny of the entire

community, and this fact of itself makes it necessary for the parties to put up men of better character and higher standing than would be necessary if they were voted for merely by their neighbors. This is not merely theoretical; experience generally has shown its truth.

ELECTIVE OR APPOINTIVE BOARDS

Is it better for boards to be elected by the people or appointed by some central authority? Here there is wider difference of opinion than upon any of the questions already asked, and the answers are not so readily forthcoming. A few years ago there was a very decided turn of public sentiment in favor of appointive boards. Recently there has been a reaction and the tendency seems to be again toward elective boards. The reason for these changes of sentiment naturally is that under no system are the people sure of securing good boards. Bad boards and bad schools may result under all methods. It is with schools as with other municipal matters in the United States, that good and bad alternate and vary with the degree of interest among the people. A bad condition of things arises, school boards are corrupt, schools deteriorate, and people become aroused and insist upon a change in method, — it may be from elective to appointive, or the reverse, — and there is an improvement under the influence of the reform movement. A good board is secured, and perhaps a good superintendent and a good system, and then this particular and typical section of the great American people, having accomplished its duty, sits down in smug satisfaction. But the very watchful "politician," seeing the people easily satisfied, gradually begins to assume control again. Whether a board is elected or appointed, pretty soon the self-seeking politician takes

the place of the good citizen, who was put in under the influence of the reform movement, and the old evils return. As has been shown in the history of many cities in this country, permanent reform in any branch of municipal government seems to be yet beyond our reach.

Now as to the question asked, this may be said: If the appointing power, say the mayor, is conscientious and intelligent and reasonably free from political control, he will appoint a good school board; if he is not he will appoint a bad school board. Persistent and strong popular sentiment are important factors.

If a city has had for a long time a fine school board, a mayor would hesitate to impair its quality by appointing an inferior man. Moreover, in the face of great public interest in education, the mayor also would hesitate to put an unsuitable man on the school board. But in general, the mayors of the country are not men of very high grade. They are local politicians of somewhat more than average intelligence and not more than average principle, who propose to work the city government for every possible advantage — business, financial, and political — to themselves.

This is the average mayor, and an institution so rich in patronage and spending so much money as the public schools, cannot hope to escape. I recall one mayor who appointed a school board for the declared purpose of removing the superintendent, because the superintendent had detected the mayor, who was a paper dealer, in frauds in selling paper to the school children. In this particular case the mayor failed, the board refusing to obey his orders.

Patronage Tempting.

Thus the average board appointed by the mayor is not of very high grade, does not contain the best men, and, in my personal judgment, is a little below the grade of smaller

boards elected by the people. I know one city in which the school board, appointed by the mayor, has been for many years a tool of a corporation doing business with the city. The local political boss is the paid employee of this corporation, and he nominates the mayor, whom the people elect, it is true. The mayor always keeps a majority of the school board friendly to this corporation. The people have at times, in desperation, tried to do something, but without success. The mayor is a pretty good mayor in general, and when election time comes there are so many questions involved besides the appointment by him of a school board that this is overlooked, and so he is elected again and again.

Small Boards Elected by People.

In my judgment, it is better to bring the election of a school board home to the people. A small board elected at large is, in the long run, likely to average better than any kind of board appointed in any other way. If it is not a good board it is the people's fault; its election is a direct issue and is not confused with other issues. It is often said that if the mayor does not appoint a good board it will count against him, and so it may; but, as I have said, so many other issues are involved that this is often lost sight of. But if there are one or two or three school-board members to be elected by the whole people they necessarily think of them. There is much more likelihood that the electors will see to it that they get good men than that the mayor will, who has so many other interests to consider. In more than one instance I have known the election of school-board members to be the principal feature of a municipal election. I recall one case in which good school-board nominees by one party were able to carry through an otherwise inferior ticket because the school-board nominations of the other party

were bad. The schools are the dearest interest the people have, and with proper effort it is easier to arouse them on this issue than on any other.

LONG OR SHORT TERMS

Should school-board members hold their office for long or short terms? Neither very long nor very short. Three or four years is a good length of term. They should remain in office long enough to be able to do good work after they have become acquainted with their duties and to demonstrate to the people what they can accomplish.

It is not wise, usually, to have a majority of the board, or even half a board, retire from office at the same time. It is better to have a majority always holding over. In some cities a board of five, elected for five years, one going out each year, has proven satisfactory. This system has one weakness — that it is too difficult to change the board. If matters are going badly the people cannot get at them soon enough. In other cities a board of nine, three going out each year, works well. This secures a strong majority familiar with the workings of the board, and it takes only two elections to upset a board if it is doing badly.

Majority should not Retire at One Time.

In general, it is safe to say that the terms of members of the school board should not be less than three years, or more than five years, and that only a minority, never a majority, should retire at one time. This secures intelligence in work and assures a continuous policy.

CONTROL OF FINANCES

Should school boards control the school finances? In a number of cities in which they do, it seems to work well.

This should never be the case unless boards are elected by the people, however. A board of education, elected, may as safely be trusted with taxation and with the expenditure of funds as a Common Council or any other board elected. If the city has a central board of finance it may be better to allow this board to make appropriations after proper representation by the school board.

One thing to be avoided in all cases is the control of school funds in any way by what is known as the Common Council, — the one municipal body that is sure to be always bad. Money for schools should be appropriated by some authority wholly in sympathy with schools and bent on their improvement. Naturally, from this point of view, the school board is best qualified.

The chief danger in conferring such power upon it is that the general taxpaying ability of the municipality may not be sufficiently considered, nor its other needs. Much is to be said in favor of a central board of taxation, acting within legally prescribed limitations. It is well to have a legal minimum, as a fixed percentage based upon the taxable property, or a gross amount per pupil enrolled, so that enough to maintain the schools at a fair degree of efficiency is made mandatory.

TENURE OF OFFICE

There is wide variation in regard to the length of the term for which both superintendents and teachers are appointed. In very many places the term for both is one scholastic year.

The term of the superintendent is, in different places, two, three, four, five, six, seven, and ten years, while in a few, the term is indefinite, "during good behavior." The

Removal should not be Difficult.

But it should never be impossible or unduly difficult to remove unfit or incompetent superintendents or teachers. The tendency of courts to decide that public officials may not be removed except for glaring malfeasance is unfortunate. Neither should permanent appointment be given until after a suitable season of probation.

Probationary Term Essential.

On the whole, my judgment is rather in favor of the indefinite tenure for both superintendent and teachers after a suitable probationary period, with the provision that removal be not made unduly difficult.

Certainly every measure is desirable that will advance the teachers professionally, dignify the office, and free all their powers for the work of teaching.

The final test of all questions of administration is its relation to the welfare of the individual children in the schools.

INDEX